

BELLISLE

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATION OF PRIESTS OF
SAINT BASIL — COLLECTED BY
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FATHER BELLISLE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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P R E F A C E

The original purpose of this study was to formulate, as far as this is possible, the philosophy of education of the Basilian Fathers. In view of the fact that Father Bellisle had for many years a tremendous influence upon the philosophy of education of the Basilian Fathers together with the fact that it was he who undertook to express this philosophy in many of his writings, it was thought advisable that he be chosen as the exponent of their philosophy of education.

Sincere acknowledgment of valuable and kind assistance as adviser is made to Assistant Professor Francis J. Donohue of the Department of Education at the University of Detroit; to the Reverend Victor Brezik, C.S.B., for his sugges-

tion of Father Bellisle as the logical exponent of the Basilian philosophy of education; to the Very Reverend E.J. McCorkell, C.S.B., and to the Very Reverend H. Carr, C.S.B., for their many suggestions and to Mr. Robert Burns, Managing Director of the Catholic Record, London, Ontario, for the use of the Catholic Record archives.

No greater tribute could be given a priest of the Congregation of St. Basil than that paid to the Reverend Henry S. Bellisle, C.S.B., by the Very Reverend E.J. McCorkell, C.S.B., on the occasion of Father Bellisle's funeral Mass in Assumption Church, Windsor, Ontario.

"One of the captains of the Army of Christ who for this reason grew to considerable stature in a comparatively short life was the priest at whose last sad obsequies we assist today. The mourning is indeed widespread. It is not only we who are crowded into this Church today who mourn him; not only the members of his own family to whom he was a guardian angel, and with whom we deeply sympathize today; not only the members of his religious family, the Basilian Fathers, who can ill afford to lose him; but many clergy and religious and people in this populous centre, and students of this great college now scattered to their homes, and students of St. Michael's in Toronto, his own college, and old boys of both these colleges throughout Ontario, New York, Ohio and Michigan who are one with us who are here in mourning the passing of a great teacher and a great priest. ...

I know that he was giving intellectual leadership here by his maturing scholarship. I am certain that his name will be written inextricably into the texture of your great tradition. But I ask you to concede St. Michael's prior claim upon him; St. Michael's who claims him for her own; and where I am able to speak of him from personal knowledge as a student, as a teacher, as a priest and as an administrator. I think that I may say that he was extraordinary in every one of these roles. ... I have known boys whose whole life has been changed by contact with Father Bellisle for a few months. One reason for this was the extraordinary degree to which he retained the spirit of a boy himself. His gay, carefree, rippling laughter was a familiar sound in the corridors of St. Michael's. One of the great triumphs of his personal influence was the retreat which he preached to the students last year. His arrival seemed like a home-coming after a few years absence, but it proved a farewell."<1>

Father Bellisle was born at Georgetown, Ontario, in 1891. After completing his studies in St. Francis School, he went to St. Michael's College, Toronto, where he continued through the High School and College courses. He received his Bach-

elor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto in 1911 and later a Master of Arts degree from the Catholic University of America. He was ordained a priest of the Congregation of St. Basil in 1916 and, after spending one year at Assumption College, he returned to St. Michael's College in Toronto, where he was Principal of the High School for eight years. He served as Registrar of St. Michael's College for one year and was then chosen Superior of that institution in 1931. Ill health compelled him to relinquish this office after three years. However, he recuperated gradually throughout the following year and was appointed professor of philosophy and assistant Superior of Assumption College where he built up as

great a reputation for scholarship and devotion to duty as he had already had at St. Michael's. Renewed illness in November of 1938 brought about his death the following month.

Among the great qualities which he possessed, perhaps the greatest were his love of study and his sincere piety. Both of these were clearly in evidence upon the briefest acquaintance. This is without doubt the reason for the tremendous influence which he exercised upon his fellow Basilians and upon his students. He had great intellectual talents. He worked hard and his heart was in his work. He knew St. Augustine, St. Thomas and Newman well. He was a gifted teacher who never ceased to study even when he was entrusted with the burdens that go with being a Superior.

But all these gifts would never have made him the great priest that he was, had it not been for his extraordinary piety. As Father McCorkell puts it:

"You were impressed by him because you felt that you were dealing with a deeply religious man. It is the tree beside the running waters that brings forth its fruit in due season. Such a tree is a triumph of nature because it is in vital contact with a living stream. The living stream in Father Bellisle's case was his priesthood which in his case was not a separate thing, but permeated and suffused with its glow every part of his life. The intimate relationship with Christ which is the privilege and glory of the priesthood he cultivated zealously; he laboured to be worthy of it; he placed it first and all other gifts were added unto him. This was the secret of his power for good; this is the lesson of his life for his brother-Basilians and for his brother priests everywhere." <2>

Father Bellisle believed that the teacher should himself be a student, interested in his subject, loving knowledge, and

zealous for the attainment of truth, inspiring by his example his students to study, and communicating to them some of his own love of the subject. <3> He himself, as has been said, was a real student. It was from Newman that he took his love for the classics, and from St. Thomas and St. Augustine that he took his love of Christian philosophy. He could not conceive an education which neglected these studies. <4>

As an administrator, he ranked among the best that the Basilians have ever had. Under his guidance as Principal of St. Michael's High School, there was made a very distinct advance in the art of forming Catholic youth. Previously, the school had existed primarily for those intending to study for the priesthood. He maintained and improved its

reputation as a nursling of vocations to the priesthood, but was particularly anxious that all the boys of Toronto who desired a Catholic education should come there, regardless of what their ability to pay the fees might be. Later, when he was Superior of St. Michael's College, he attempted to make a Catholic education available for all Catholic boys by lowering fees and establishing East and West End branches of the High School.

As Superior of St. Michael's from 1931-34, he took two important steps, either of which alone may be considered landmarks in the history of St. Michael's. The first was the purchase of the College farms, an entirely new departure in the Basilian traditions. However, his insight

into the future needs of the College and his courage prompted him to make this purchase, which may ultimately prove to be of the greatest value. The other step was taken to meet a difficulty which arose when the University of Toronto discontinued its regular First Year course, thereby making it impossible for graduates of American High Schools to enroll at St. Michael's without an additional year of study. This additional year, Father Bellisle was able to provide through the generosity of Assumption College and the University of Western Ontario, the American freshmen enrolling as Assumption College students resident at St. Michael's College. This arrangement has made it possible for St. Michael's to

double its numbers within a few years.

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In spite of his many administrative duties, Father Bellisle found time to improve his scholarship. As has been remarked already, he was gifted intellectually to an extraordinary degree. However, he likewise had the patience and perseverance of a research student; and this is the reason for his success with St. Augustine, St. Thomas and Newman. For some years he held a professorial position in the Institute of Mediaeval Studies, to the organization and development of which he was very devoted.

However, Father Bellisle was not merely a great scholar and teacher; he was also a great priest. He had, as Father McCorkell puts it:

"... great faith and deep humility. The combined influence of those two virtues proves to be powerful in any man, but in Father Bellisle it was irresistible. ... His sermons and conferences had an uniquely persuasive quality such as only a man of God can impart to everything he says. Even his lectures on philosophy gave unmistakable signs that he was not only a scholar but a priest. Whatever way you came in contact with him you were bound to recognize a personality to which nature and grace combined to give a quality almost unique. What is the more extraordinary is that at the same time he was extremely affable and companionable. Indeed he seemed to retain to an unusual extent the spirit of a boy throughout his whole life, and perhaps this is the secret on the natural side of his influence over boys.

<6>



CHAPTER 2

Underlying Principles of Father Bellisle's Philosophy of Education

It has been said that Father Bellisle drew many of his ideas from an intensive study of St. Augustine whom he loved and respected as one of the greatest intellectual giants in the history of the world. That he was a Christian and a saint makes his achievement all the more valuable. In an address to a graduating class, Father Bellisle pointed out that St. Augustine, upon beginning his defence of Christianity, felt that his first task was to persuade proud men how great is the virtue of humility. <1> This virtue has been caricatured so often that even amongst good Christians it is quite liable to be misunder-

stood. Dickens "Uriah 'Eap" and similar characters have done much to distort one of the fairest and most beautiful of the Christian virtues. Humility has been so often identified with weakness, that people are ashamed to have humility, or at least, to show it. The humble man surely, if such is a faithful picture, cannot possess any true nobility of soul. However, since humility is a virtue, it is strength. Christian writers have always insisted that this virtue is the foundation of the entire structure. They say that the kingdom of heaven cannot be established within the soul of the individual unless the foundation be laid deeply and securely in humility.

Humility is a loftiness of mind. It

transcends all earthly heights. The Christian possessed of this virtue is raised above all earthly dignities. He is raised above the mountain's peak and looks upward to God Who alone is His Master, and downward upon the things of ~~this~~ world. He uses them only as stepping-stones to scale the mountain which leads to God.

Why have the things of this world so little attraction for the Christian whose soul is strengthened by the possession of this virtue? St. Augustine gives the reason in the words which follow: temporalis nobilitate nutantia. These heights, above which the Christian is raised, these earthly dignities, are unstable. They sway backward and for-



ward because they are, as all temporal things, by their very nature, changeable. This principle of change, a principle governing all temporal things, has its root in the Christian doctrine of creation. Since they have been created, by their very nature they will change, they will pass. The Christian strengthened by the virtue of humility is raised above them and has his mind and heart fixed on God alone. With God, and God alone, there is no change or shadow of alteration. This loftiness of soul, this Christian humility, he cannot acquire himself. This is the reason for the words, donata divina gratia. This divine grace is nothing else than a sharing in the very life of God. St. Thomas, says Father Bellisle, describes it as a quaedam

inchoatio gloriae, "a certain beginning of glory". <2> Men of themselves unstable, attracted by the beautiful things of this world, are healed and strengthened by divine grace so that they are enabled to prefer God to the things which He has made.

This loftiness of soul, this stability in the midst of a changing world, this strength which raises one above a changing order, has been imitated by men of the world. Yet they have only the shadow of the reality. Human arrogance may look like Christian humility, Christian loftiness of soul, but it breaks down in the face of trial. The self-reliant man of the world looks to be as immovable as the rock. But take away his supports and see what happens. Deprive him of wealth, of health, of

social position, and see how weak he is. The Christian, possessing the virtue of humility, relies upon God alone. He will not fail him. This is the attitude of the Christian.

There is no doubt that humility is a distinctly Christian virtue. St. Thomas finds no trace of it in Aristotle. Aristotle, he says, treats of virtues in so far as they apply to civil life. He describes this virtue in the following way: "Humility, in so far as it is a special virtue, has reference especially to the subjection of man to God on account of Whom, by humbling himself, he subjects himself to others." <3> So it is that the Christian has God alone for his Master. Any service he pays to

men is on account of God. He serves God, and Him alone.

The most important work of a Catholic college or university is therefore to deepen knowledge of the Christian life, to encourage one another by example in the practice of it, to treasure the grace which is in men by the use of the Sacraments, to beg an increase of it by constant prayer. Secular institutions can and do teach what Catholics call profane knowledge, and they sometimes do this with extraordinary success. But only a Catholic college can teach the Christian life. Religious teachers know that the Christian virtue of humility is the beginning of all true greatness. That is why they are so determined to make this the foundation of all true learning. <4>

In this life, virtue is more important than knowledge. Knowledge has been often identified with power. However, power uncontrolled by virtue is more harmful than good. Our Lord's solemn warning that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven applies not only to silver and gold, but to the riches of the mind which will feed the flame of pride unless controlled by the Christian virtues. <5>

Leadership is often suggested to university graduates as an obligation imposed upon them by their academic success. But a leader must know where he is going. St. Paul was a great leader

of men, and he knew where he was going. He constantly asked others to follow him as he followed Christ. The truth of the matter was that it was not St. Paul who was doing the leading, but it was Christ Who was leading through the instrumentality of St. Paul. So too, if a man desires to lead others, he must be a follower of Christ Who is the way, the truth and the life. He must first learn to obey Christ before he can lead to the truth. That is why spiritual writers insist on the fact that he alone safely commands who has first learned how to obey. Since obedience is prompted by humility, it is quite simple to understand why he who would lead others to a knowledge of the truth must himself possess a high degree of the virtue of

humility. This is why Father Bellisle maintains that humility is the very foundation stone of all true learning and leadership.

It was St. Augustine who transferred and transformed the living treasures of intellectual scholarship from the Platonic kingdom into the kingdom of Christ. He was guided by the light of revelation and aided by grace. Thus it was that he was able to soar into regions unknown to Plato and Plotinus, and to find himself at home there. Men like St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus also were aided by the light of faith and of grace. They were not rivals, each seeking to undo what the other had done, but rather they were members of one family interested in a common

cause, each contributing something either to enlarge or strengthen or to beautify the Christian structure. <6>

A knowledge of the history of Christian thought enables one to understand better the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas. Christian philosophers who have made a deep study of him have come to honor and love him. They have seen him at work, laying hold of the intellectual treasures found in the philosophy of Aristotle. They have watched him, the skilful architect of a complete philosophical system, select from the materials at hand what is in accord with his plan and purpose, and fit all together in such a way that order is never disturbed. They have seen and understood that St. Thomas ex-

presses in a faultless way what the other members of the Christian family have been aiming at and sometimes have not achieved. <7> This is why Father Bellisle can truthfully say:

"Thus what is true and hence living, in Greek thought, has passed into the Christian tradition. Then, and then only, did it begin to live its true life; for it has been brought into union with Him from whom all truth flows, who became Incarnate and who is at once both the Truth and the Life".
<8>

Both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine have a great deal to say about the teaching office. There is a close parallel between the two great thinkers. Father Bellisle shows this similarity as follows:

"Between the doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas in regard to the teaching office there is a remarkable agreement

despite the divergence of their respective methods of approach. In the dialogue "De Magistro" St. Augustine emphasizes the part played by God in the generation of knowledge within the mind of the student. St. Thomas is attacking the problem from a different angle and consciously so (De Veritate, Question XI). He is concerned with describing primarily the function of the human teacher in the teaching process. Hence his doctrine is not in conflict with the doctrine of St. Augustine but rather its complement.

Augustine says in the book "De Magistro" (Chapter XI, n. 38); (Chapter XIV, n. 46): "God alone has a seat in the heavens, God who teaches truth from within: man is related to this seat as the husbandman to the tree. But the husbandman is not the maker of the tree but activates it. Therefore man cannot be said to be a teacher of knowledge but to dispose for knowledge.

St. Thomas (De Veritate, Question XI, Art. 1, Objection 8) interprets this statement as follows: "Augustine in his book 'De Magistro' when he proves that God alone teaches, does not intend to exclude man as the teacher from without, but to state that God alone teaches from within. <9>

These two great Christian teachers, then,

are in complete accord. In fact, it is quite impossible, as Father Bellisle goes on to say, to understand the discussion of St. Thomas unless one has before him the discussion of St. Augustine. <10> Many of the questions which St. Thomas discusses arise out of the dialogue of St. Augustine. Christian philosophers are fortunate in having the combined work of these two great masters to state and interpret the principles which should govern the science of Christian teaching. On this point Father Bellisle says:

It is quite evident in following the lead of these two great doctors of the Christian Church we are trying to live again with them in a Christian universe. They usher us into their kingdom, the kingdom of the mind, over which presides uncreated wisdom, as its overlord and master. Within this kingdom, fashioned from Christian concepts, they

live and move and have their being. Within this kingdom we must enter if we hope to share thir thought. <ll>

Of course, the doctrine of St. Thomas and of St. Augustine on the teaching office pre-supposes a Christian metaphysics. It is the very roack and foundation stone upon which the whole structure is built. Such ideas as the nature of the human mind, the existence of God, the existence and nature of angels are pre-supposed in the discussion of Christian pedagogy. There is a resemblance between the human mind and the Mind of God. It is from the uncreated Truth that the human mind derives both its strength and dignity. God alone presides over it, and it is related to God as the body is related

Now every intellectual system pre-supposes a pedagogy. Since Catholic thinkers are both by choice and necessity within the Thomistic system, they should be acquainted with and follow a Thomistic pedagogy, a Thomistic method for the student and the teacher. <12>

There are three who share in the formation of knowledge within the human mind; (1) God, (2) the teacher, (3) the student. If man wishes to achieve knowledge, each of these three must perform his proper office. This is Christian humanism in respect to knowledge. Order is a Christian principle, and unless observed, the consequences are always in the long run disastrous. The Christian must take a long view of

things. His vision, like his Master's, must aim at stretching from to end mightily. He does not look for quick returns, but is satisfied as long as he is building in accord with the divine plan. Hence, he must know first the nature of the object with which he deals, in order to deal with that object correctly. That is why, in dealing with human knowledge and its formation within the mind, it is of the gravest concern that the Christian philosopher understand the nature of human knowledge and the nature of the mind in which that knowledge is generated. It is also important that both teacher and student understand the office proper to each, in order that one may not usurp the duties of the other. It is equally

important that the teacher and student do not usurp the office of God in regard to the function of knowledge within the mind. If God's work within the human mind is interfered with or completely undone, it is not surprising when an unhealthy mental state results. There are various phases and stages of this insanity. The angels first became insane — unsound in mind — (for they could not become unsound in body, since they have none) before they began their malicious attack upon God and all things good. <13>

First, then, in an effort to understand the art of teaching, it will be necessary to explore the human mind to discover just what kind of instrument is being treated. In dealing with animals, care

is taken to consider them, not as men nor as plants, but as animals. If one neglected to take account of the nature of animals, they might die. To treat animals like men, to feed, house, care for them and demand the same results as men achieve would be to destroy them. The converse is equally true. To treat men as animals, without any account being made for the needs peculiar to man, his origin as well as his destiny, is equally disastrous. To treat men, on the other hand, as angels, to neglect to take account of the fact that he has a body, to construct upon the assumption that man is mind alone, this is to treat man differently from what he is, and hence to treat him badly, to abuse rather than to use him properly. Thus, one must recognize at the outset the

real nature of man, not the nature constructed for him by false philosophy, but the nature that has been given to him by God.

Father Bellisle sums up this idea clearly in the following passage:

"In the hierarchy of creation, man has been given a place which is his own. He is placed beneath the angels and less than they. He is placed above the animal kingdom. No matter how closely some of the actions of the animals resemble the actions of men, resemblance is not sameness. Unlike the animal, he has an immortal soul, the direct creation of the Almighty. This soul is made to the image and likeness of God. "The Light of His countenance is signed upon us." Unlike the angel, his body is an integral part of his nature. The disembodied soul is not the perfect man. Man's nature is only integrated by the union of body and soul." <14>

With this as the basic principle, the Christian teacher is prepared to some

extent to embark upon the study of the mind of the student to see how it must be used by him in the acquisition of knowledge.

The beginnings of the moral virtues are present in the souls of men from the first moment of their entrance into life. Through the exercise of the proper acts they come to full perfection. The situation is similar in regard to knowledge. The beginnings of knowledge are present at birth. As Father Bellisle points out, this is different from saying, as Descartes did, that man comes into life with knowledge already formed within the soul. The capacity for knowledge is present; the inclination, the tendency toward knowledge is present. This is part of man's natural endowment,

part of the equipment with which God, in His Goodness, starts man into life. St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, has a very powerful word to describe the condition of the mind at birth, as yet without knowledge, but with the power to acquire it. He calls these first beginnings of knowledge "seminal" seeds. Now seeds sown in fertile soil, if properly cultivate, will come to full maturity and produce abundant fruit. The seeds of knowledge are always good. They come from the bountiful Hand of God. The soil is a soil once good, but vitiated by original sin. The seed allowed to develop in this soil undided by grace, without help from teachers who have knowledge and skill, produces a culture indeed, but a wild culture.



So good is the seed that even when sown in soil damaged by sin, if developed by skillful teachers, it produces a culture whose fruit is good. The works of the human mind without grace show how powerful is the seed planted by God. Greek and Roman culture is of this kind. Most of its fruit is truly good. That is why St. Augustine and St. Thomas used it to such advantage. <15>

God plays the most important role in man's acquisition of truth. He has placed in man the natural light of reason by which the basic principles of the structure of knowledge are known. In consequence of the possession of this light, man bears a resemblance to uncreated Truth. Since human teaching cannot be in any way effective without

this light, it is God Who teaches from within. He bears the same relation in the process of teaching to the human mind as nature to the process of healing. This does not mean that the human teacher is not a teacher in the proper and strict sense of the term. As Father Bellisle explains it:

"To say, as we must, that the physician is a minister, a coadjutor to nature in the process of healing is not to deny that the physician is the cause of health in the patient. The teacher is likewise the coadjutor of God in the formation of knowledge within the student." <16>

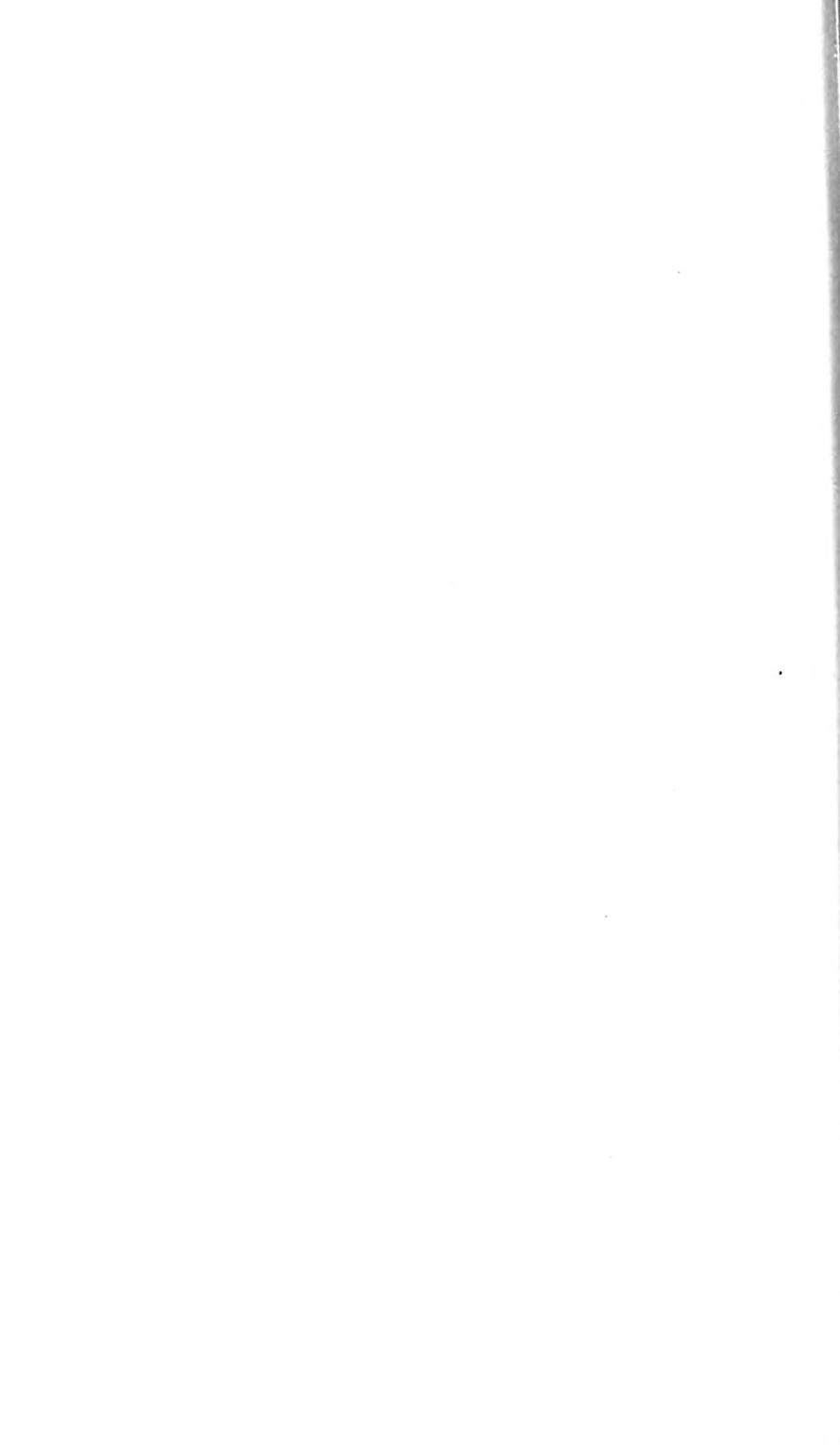
These basic principles of knowledge man approves and accepts as true, but man himself does not originate them. They do not flow from the human mind as part of itself. Here, as elsewhere in know-

ledge, man is dependent upon a world which is not of his own making. The refusal to accept these principles, any one or even all of them, as objective, as true in their own right, independent of the human mind, the substitution of other principles for them, has been responsible for the creation of a new structure in the world of ideas within which Christian truth cannot live.

So it is that the principality of the teaching office belongs to God. Divine Truth speaks within men through the impression of His own likeness. It is in virtue of this native gift that man is enabled to pass judgment, to determine the true from the false. When Christ cautioned His disciples not to be called "masters", since there is only

one Master -- God -- He was emphasizing the part played by God in the teaching office. There is, then, only one interior Master Who presides over the mind of man, and this Master is the uncreated Truth. It is from this source that the mind of man, even when unregenerated, derives its dignity. <17>

The next important person in the process of acquiring knowledge is the human teacher. The teacher in fulfilling his office makes use of signs, words (spoken or written), and gestures such as pointing with the finger. It is not possible to teach unless there is already some knowledge present within the mind of the student. Method of teaching and content of teaching depend upon how much



knowledge is actually present. Hence the teacher must be on the alert to determine how far the student has advanced relative to the subject assigned him to teach. Father Bellisle quotes Cardinal Newman, who, with his usual insight, has well described this phase of the teaching office:

"Minds in different states and circumstances cannot understand one another. ... in all cases they must be instructed according to their capacity, and if not taught step by step, they learn only so much the less; children do not apprehend the thoughts of grown people, nor savages the instincts of civilization, nor blind men the perceptions of sight, nor pagans the doctrines of Christianity, nor men the experience of angels. In a lecture of mine I have illustrated this phenomenon by the supposed instance of a foreigner, who, after reading a commentary on the principles of English law, does not get nearer to a real apprehension of them than to be led to accuse Englishmen of considering that the Queen is impeccable and infallible, and that Parliament is omnipotent. Mr. Kingsley has read me from beginning to end in the fashion in which the hypothetical Russian read Blackstone."



Father Bellisle goes on to say that he is not here concerned with the controversy, but that he is interested in the description of what must be presupposed if two minds are to understand each other. The student must be possessed of sufficient knowledge to be able to understand the teacher. If he does not, the efforts of the teacher must necessarily end in failure. The teacher's presentation may in itself be brilliant, but unless it is understood by his students, he is merely talking to himself. <19>

By way of illustration, Father Bellisle makes himself very clear on the matter. He says:

"Thus if the purpose is to teach the student the definition of man, he must know the meaning of the words "animal"



and endowed "with reason". If we are to be taught a conclusion we must likewise be taught the premises or grounds upon which it rests. All teaching depends for its success upon pre-existent knowledge." <20>

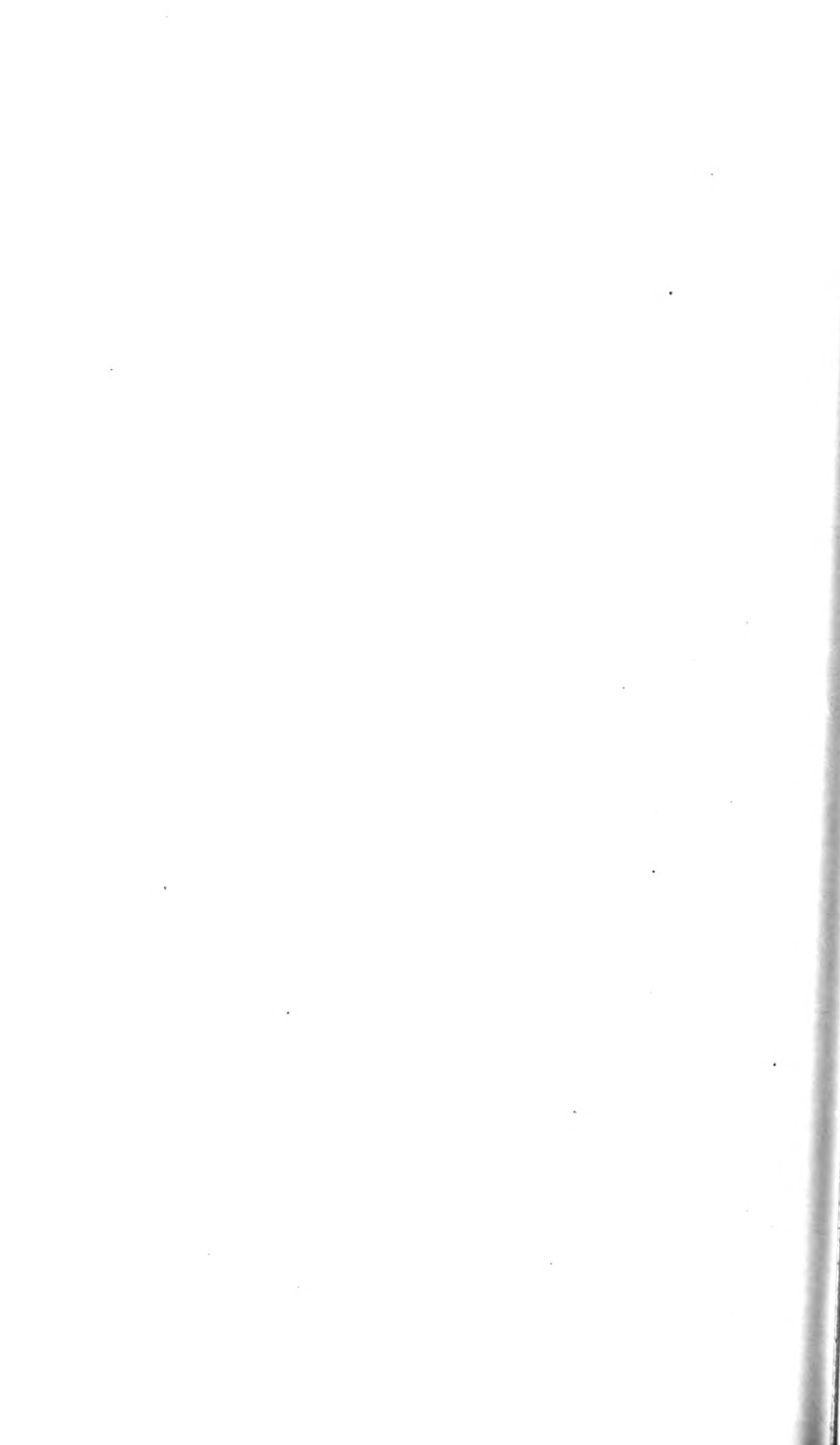
Man's intelligence receives ideas from sensible signs and words which may be either spoken or written. It is these ideas that man uses to form knowledge. Thus, signs themselves are not productive of knowledge, but it is the reason moving from principle to conclusion which accompanies it. The teacher cannot pour knowledge into the mind of the student. The same knowledge numerically which is in the mind of the teacher does not leave his mind and find its way into the mind of the student. However, by teaching, knowledge is generated within the student like to the knowledge already within the teacher. In other



words, the innate capacity for knowledge is actualized through the teaching process. <21>

As has been stated previously, however, the teacher is a real cause of knowledge within the mind of the student. Father Bellisle shows how this takes place by a comparison of the teacher to a physician. He says:

"The physician, though he works from without, while nature works from within, is a real cause of health within the patient. He can and ought to be regarded as having cured the patient. So too the human teacher is a real cause of knowledge within the mind of the student. He too works from without while God works from within. Thus the human teacher teaches truth and can be said to illumine the mind of the student. He does not pour light into the mind, but he aids the light of reason within the student in attaining to the perfection of knowledge through the things which he proposes from without. In this sense St. Thomas interprets the words of St. Paul describing his own mission to teach:



"And to enlighten all men that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God Who created all things." (Ephes. 3, 9) <22>

The words of the teacher, then, whether they be spoken or written, cause knowledge within the student just as really as do the things outside the mind. In fact, the words of the teacher are even closer to the intelligence of the student than things are, because words are signs naturally adapted to cause knowledge. Since words are signs of ideas, it is from these ideas that the structure of knowledge within the mind of the student is built. There must already exist a measure of intellectual knowledge before words can be understood. The understanding of words pre-supposes within the intelligence the ideas

already formed of which they are the signs. Otherwise, the words would not be understood. This is why the words of the teacher are closer to the intelligence of the student than things are.

Now, of course, the intelligence is not related in the same way to all intelligible objects. The intelligence can see some objects immediately. These objects are known in themselves. In them are contained other truths which can only be discovered through reason. However, they are not self evident, and are contained implicitly in the principles previously known. So it is that the intellect needs some moving cause to arrive at these truths. This moving cause is teaching. The teacher stimulates and moves the intellect of the



student to know the things which he teaches. Just as an inanimate object cannot move unless the movement be communicated to it from without, neither can the mind complete the movement from principles to the truths contained in them unless it is moved from without by the teacher. <23>

The certitude of knowledge arises from the certitude of principles. Conclusions can never be known with certitude until they are resolved into principles. So when one knows with certitude, this certitude is made possible through the possession of the light of reason which has been given to man by God. It is in this way that God speaks to man on the level of nature. Man would never arrive by his own unaided efforts at certitude, were he not already in possession

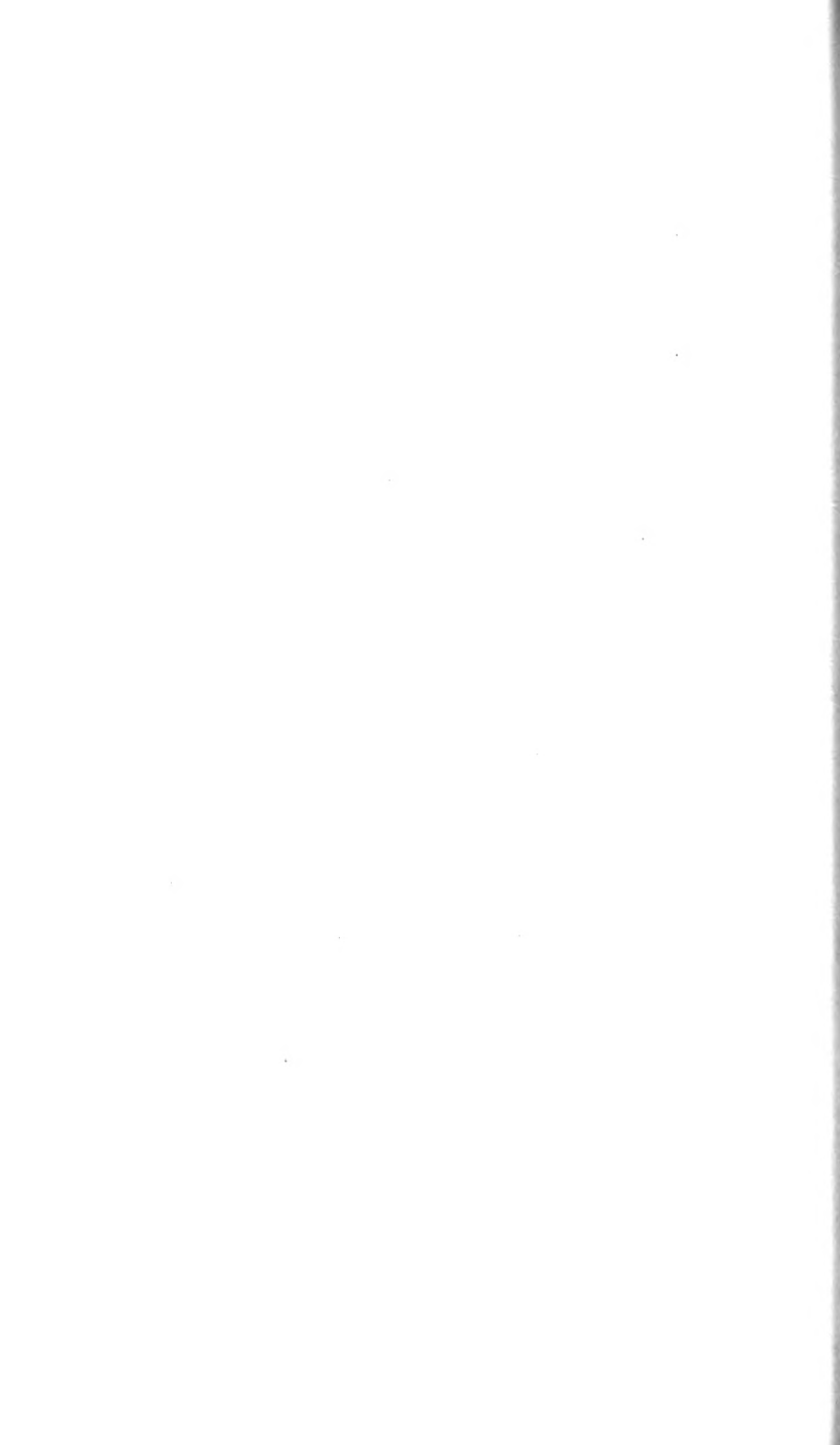


of it. Hence the far-reaching consequences of the sin of Descartes against the light, the light of intelligence. It is this sin that has infected the modern mind; for the Cartesian doubt was a voluntary doubt imposed by the will, and not one rising naturally from the objects of intelligence. <24>

No human teacher can impart these fundamental principles to the student. The student sees them through the light of reason which God has given. The possibility of certitude is present with man from the beginning. It is part of his native endowment. To quarrel with it or to doubt it, is to quarrel with his own nature. To question these basic principles, to refuse to submit his mind to their governance, is to

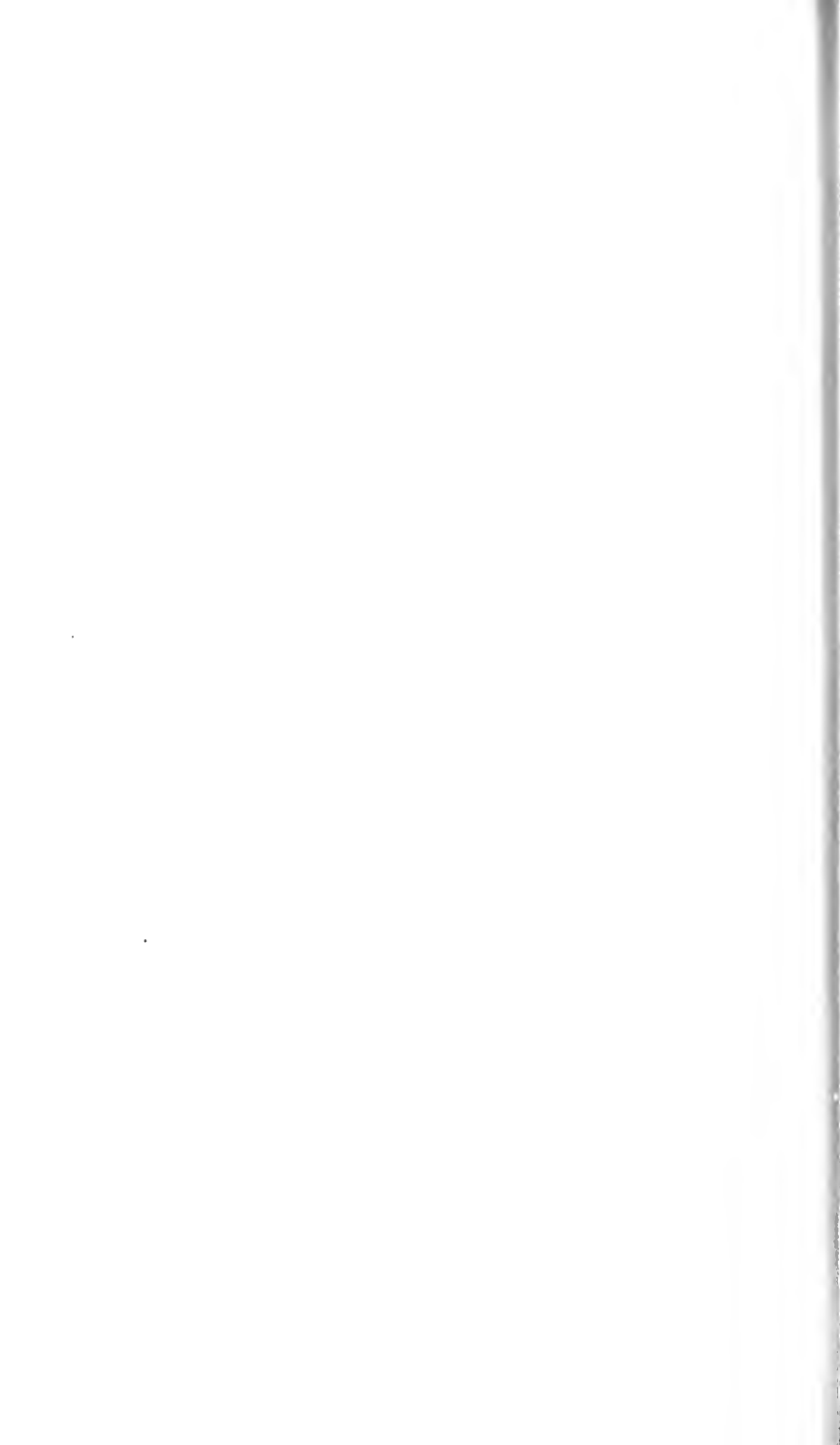
question the constitution of man's own nature, and ultimately the constitution of the universe as it has been formed by God. Man must humble himself under the mighty Hand of God from the very beginning of knowledge. He must have docility. <25> That is why the virtue of humility was stressed at the very outset of this chapter.

It can be seen, then, that the certitude of knowledge or science comes from God alone; for He has given to man the light of reason. When St. Thomas speaks of the word "science" he means knowledge through principles. The experimental sciences, then, must take their legitimate places within the hierarchy of the sciences, not occupying the first place, however, but occupying



a place much lower down in the scale of sciences. <26>

From what has already been stated, it can be seen that the student does not learn first principles from his teacher, but conclusions only. Unless the student possesses these first principles, no human teacher can impart them to him. Principles of this kind cannot be built from experience — piling fact upon fact — the statistical method; but he must see them in the light of reason which is communicated to him by God. It is the misunderstanding of the relationship between the human mind and the fundamental principles of thought that has been responsible for the defects within the logic of John Stuart Mill who attacks the problem from the



experimental side, and the excesses of Kant who attacks the same problem from analysis of the structure of the mind.

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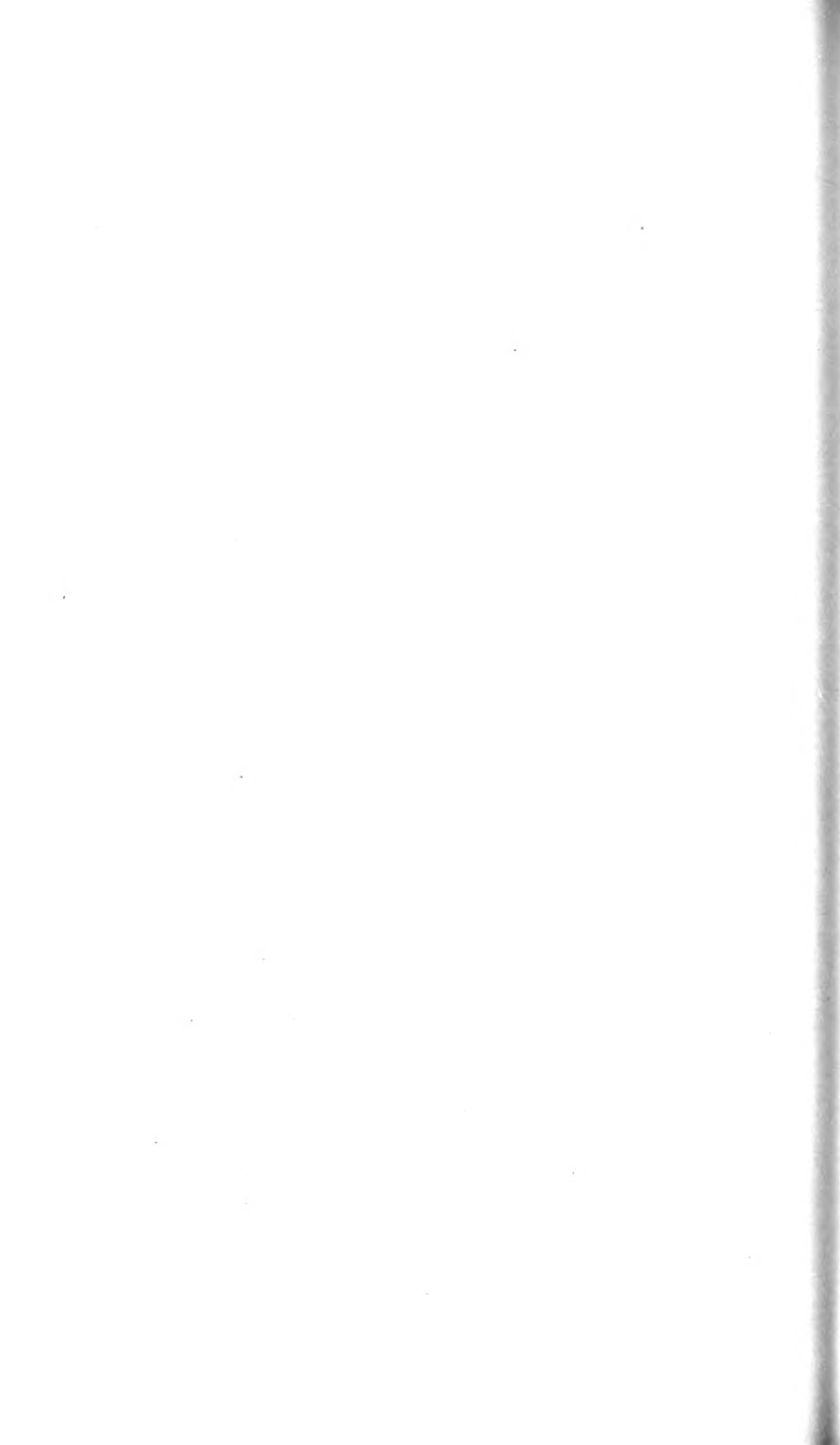
Sofar, only two aspects of the process of learning have been considered, namely, God and the human teacher. There is, of course, a third — the student. There is no doubt that the ordinary person can, by the light of reason conferred upon him by God, arrive at a knowledge of many things without the aid of a teacher. This is evident in the case of all who acquire knowledge through the process of discovery. However, it would be inaccurate to describe such a person as the teacher of himself. A teacher, in the strict sense of the word, must possess explicit and per-

fectly the knowledge which he causes in another. It is clear that he who discovers truth for himself does not as yet possess it. It might also be mentioned here that a teacher is just so much the less a teacher in so far as his knowledge of the subject assigned to him to teach is faulty or inadequate.

<28>

Regarding learning by discovery, Father Bellisle says as follows:

"The method of discovery is more perfect if we take as our standard of measurement the mind of the student. He who can make discoveries for himself is usually the more capable student. But if our standard of measurement is knowledge, the teaching method is the more perfect. St. Thomas is looking at the whole situation objectively. The teacher, who is a teacher, knows his entire science explicitly. He can in consequence guide the student more effectively towards knowledge than can the student himself. He knows, if a teacher in the complete sense, not only



the principles and conclusions of his own science, but its relation to other sciences within the hierarchy. He does not claim more for his science than it, as an objective structure, within a larger structure can legitimately claim for itself. St. Thomas is in consequence afraid of the specialist who is only a specialist, who has not seen where his science is placed within the hierarchy of the sciences. St. Thomas is never unmindful that truth is one and all the sciences range themselves in order, in accord with the nature of the matter with which they treat! <29>

Thus a teacher is a teacher in the strict sense only in so far as he has knowledge, a complete mastery of his subject. He participates in the correct notion of teacher only as far as his knowledge extends, and no further. As Father Bellisle sums up this idea:

"The Christian structure of knowledge is not built upon sand. It rests ultimately upon the fact that God is truth. Its principles which the human mind sees, but does not create, the mind is able to see by the light of reason divinely imparted. The certitude of the mind and

and the certitude of truth is guaranteed from the fact that "Deus est veritas". <30>

In the process of learning on the part of the student, there is one phase which is almost completely neglected by most writers on the subject, but which to Father Bellisle is of great importance. This aspect of the learning process is the part played by the angels. Most modern educationists would scoff at the idea of treating this seriously. Yet, it cannot be ignored by the Catholic teacher. The angels can have a tremendous influence upon man. This being the case, a consideration of their role in human learning should be introduced at this point.

Father Bellisle shows that angels can influence man in two different ways.



First of all, they may assume human form; in which case, they deal with men in just the same manner as men do with one another. They use human speech and human signs just as a human teacher would do. This was the case, when as the Sacred Scriptures narrate, Raphael visited Tobias. Secondly, angels may deal with man invisibly. Since in the hierarchy of creation the angel stands midway between God and man, he (the angel) has a method of teaching proper to himself. It is inferior to the method proper to God, but it is superior to the human method. To understand how the angel deals with man invisibly, it will be necessary to determine more accurately the divine and human method of teaching. <31>

As has been pointed out already, not all things are equally intelligible to man. He sees some objects of the intelligence immediately; but others are known only after an examination of the principles from which they flow. "The things which lie around the doors of our senses, these we are prepared by nature to deal with", says Father Bellisle. <32> Man does not know God and the angels directly, but by analogy. Even though God and the angels are, in themselves, more intelligible, they are not so to man.

When man wishes to arrive at a knowledge of things that are unknown, he makes use of a light, the light of intelligence, the intellectus agens, which is part of



his native endowment. He makes concepts which he forms from his experience.

"These concepts are related to the intellectual light as instruments to the artificer." <33> They are the means out which the whole fabric of knowledge is constructed. Father Bellisle goes on to explain as follows:

"God in regard both to intellectual light with which we are supplied and the use we make of concepts is a cause of knowledge in us in a way most excellent. For He Himself has signed the soul with intellectual light. He has impressed upon the soul an awareness of first principles. These first principles are not only the starting points of the sciences, but the seeds out which they are developed. "Quia et ipsam animam intellectuali lumine insignivit et notitiam primorum principiorum ei impressit, quae sunt quasi quaedam seminaria scientiarum; sicut et aliis naturalibus rebus impressit seminales rationes effectuum producendorum." (De Veritate, q. XI, art. III c.). Notice the powerful words St. Thomas is using. (1) "Insignivit",

as the wax is signed with a seal and the image has power only in virtue of Him from Whom it has come, the light of Whose countenance it is. (2) "Notitia!" Mark St. Thomas does not use "cognitio" but "notitia", awareness, our ability to see first principles. This has come to us from God. (3) The principles are "seminaria scientiarum", seed plots of the sciences. They contain then in germ all the sciences, without them no development would be possible. (4) "Sicut et aliis naturalibus rebus impressit seminales rationes effectuum producendorum". Mark the figure. God has given the grain of wheat, the life germ which makes possible not only all future development, but it also acts as a principle of control. For we do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. Thus the principles possessed by the mind are not only the source of future knowledge, but they are also principles of control bringing order and system into the structure of knowledge as it grows within the mind. <34>

The human teacher in the order of nature is the equal of the one whom he instructs, not superior to him. Hence he cannot be the cause of light within the soul of his student. He cannot increase this

intellectual light and cannot make his student aware of the first principles.

St. Thomas says this very same thing, as Father Bellisle points out — Non sicut notitiam principiorum tradens.

<35> These three functions, namely, the causing of light within the soul of man, increasing of this intellectual light and the making of another aware of first principles, are reserved for God alone. He alone presides over the intelligence. What is there, then, that the human teacher can do? As has been shown, the knowledge of things yet unknown is contained in the first principles implicitly. The human teacher can and actually does cause in his student the knowledge hidden in first principles by the use of sensible signs

such as the written or spoken word.

The angel, by his very nature, possesses intellectual light more perfectly than man does. So he can teach men in a manner inferior to God, but superior to any human teacher. He cannot infuse intellectual light into the soul, it is true. Yet he can strengthen the intellectual light already infused by God by adding the light of his own intelligence to the light within the souls of men.

"The angel is quite skilful in accomplishing this", says Father Bellisle,

"just as on a lower level architects and builders know how to use one body to strengthen another." <36> The

angel cannot give man an awareness of first principles any more than human teachers can. Furthermore, the angel

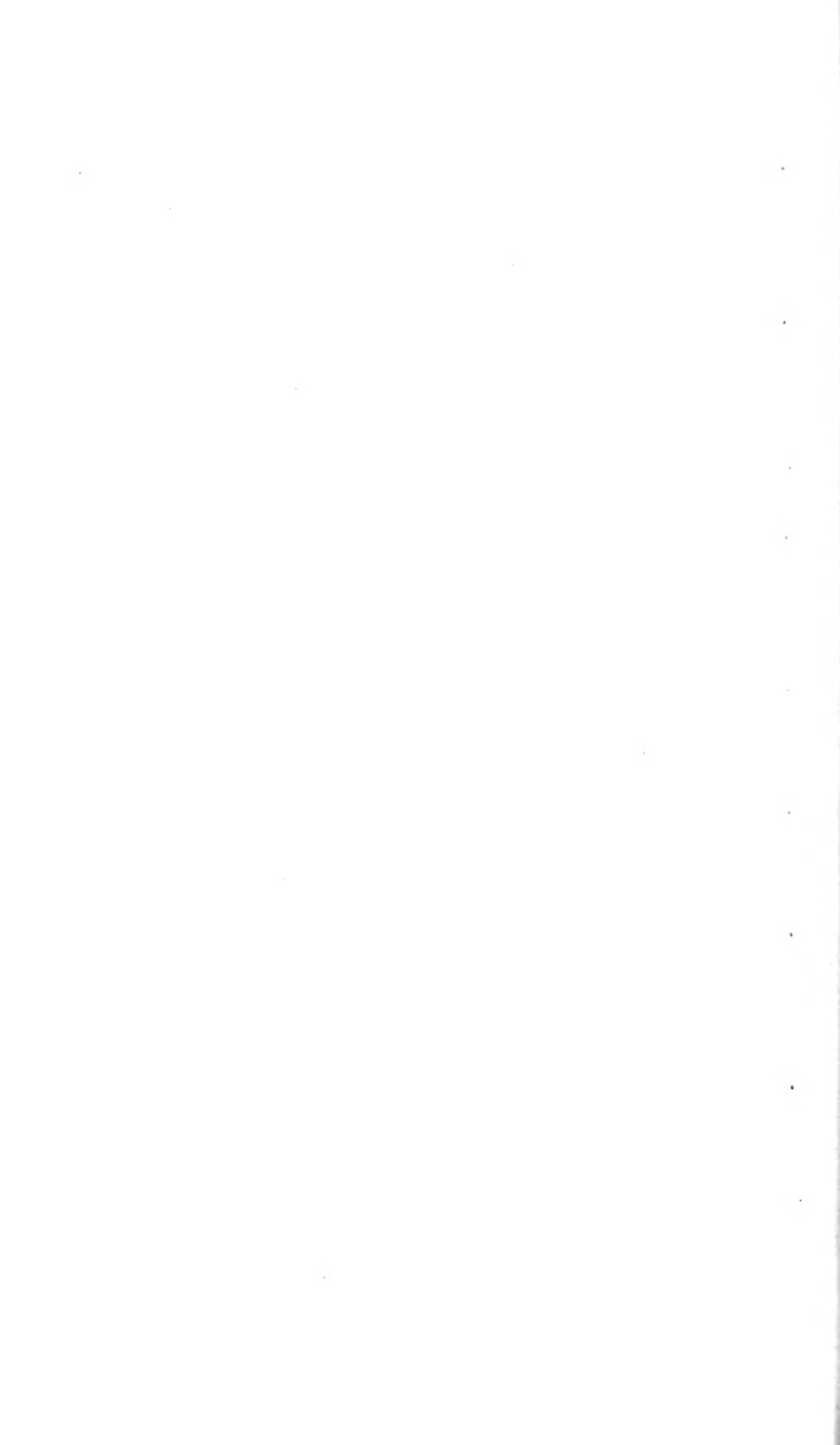
does not use sensible signs when he works invisibly. The way the angel does influence man is by working upon the imagination. He can produce images. These images or phantasma set in motion man's intellectual equipment and lead him on to the discovery and development of truths otherwise unattainable. It is in this way that man is led to a knowledge of truths known to the angel, but unknown to himself.

To sum up, then, as Father Bellisle does, all these principles in the process of learning:

In regard to teaching St. Thomas takes definitely and consciously the following positions.

1. God alone works within the mind, infusing light.

2. The angel infuses neither the light of nature nor the light of grace, but strengthens the light of nature divinely infused.
3. The angel does not create ideas within the mind nor does he immediately illumine the phantasma. But by joining the light of his intelligence with ours, our intellect is enabled to more effectively illumine the phantasms.
4. The angel causes the likeness of things, ideas, to appear in our mind. He does this either by moving the imagination or strengthening our intellect.
5. The angel knows more than we do. His teaching method is more excellent than ours.
6. St. Thomas is discussing "angel" in general and hence his doctrine applies to angels, good and bad.
7. The importance of devotion to the good angels as a help in both teaching and learning is a logical corollary of the Thomistic doctrine.
8. The teacher does not cause truth within the mind, but causes a knowledge of the truth. This is an important Thomistic position and gives a definite character to the entire structure. Propositions which are taught are true before they are known by us. Truth does



not depend upon our knowledge, but on the nature of things. St. Thomas thus clearly separates himself once for all from all forms of idealism. His doctrine is in direct opposition to the doctrine of Kant, Hegel, and Neo-Hegelians so prominent today.

9. Our intellect is compelled by the intelligible object. We are compelled to assent to conclusions through demonstration which derives its power from principles. <37>

The denial of any one of these truths, or of all of them, is always disastrous.

Witness the tragedy of modern philosophy.

Father Bellisle compares the history of modern philosophy to the building of the city and the tower of Babel. God was to have no part in it.

Unlike the master builders in mediaeval times this structure was conceived and executed to glorify men. Its builders wished to be independent of God. They were not satisfied with stone which God provides, but must have brick made by human hands. They were not satisfied

with mortar which, by the strength which God has given, binds together successfully things found apart, but they must use slime which gives the appearance of strength to things to be united but not the reality. God confused their tongues and the builders were scattered. Descartes justly regarded as the father of modern philosophy conceived, on a different level, a similar plan. At the outset he claimed independence for philosophy, independence from revealed truth. Philosophy must no longer be shackled by Truth. He was not satisfied with the materials which God supplies. He would have brick and not stone. He would draw his materials from within his own mind. He was not satisfied with his own nature and quarreled with it. He would become what he thought he ought to be. He was thought and his body and the world in which he moved was extension. Thus he deliberately made divisions which he could not heal. The Cartesian soul and the Cartesian body, thought and extension, between these no union is possible. The structure was not improved by Locke. It was made worse by Berkeley. It suffered almost complete collapse with Home (sic) Kant made a new attempt to strengthen and unify the tottering bacric. Rebuilt by Kant and enlarged by Hegel, it is even less satisfactory than before. In our own day it seems that God has confused the minds and tongues of men who speak in the name of philos-

ophy. They use a language which no one else understands and it is very doubtful oftentimes if they themselves understand. <38>

This confusion in the modern mind is not all something new. It had its parallel in pagan antiquity. It is the result of monstrous forces released by the worship of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome. The god of wealth, held in such high honor by the Greeks and Romans, found willing worshippers in ever increasing numbers, each striving to gain more of this world's good than his neighbor, using means condemned both by reason and Revelation. Such worship hardens the hearts of men and prompts them to commit injustice. The god of pleasure at whose shrine the pagans worshipped with such enthusiasm



that his cult became a fine art, to whose cult the god of wealth ministered in such lavish fashion, this same god of pleasure is being worshipped today with an enthusiasm proportionate to the abandonment of Christian belief and practice. The god of pride prevents the mind of men from submitting itself to the discipline of truth. This trinity of false gods, the god of wealth, the god of pleasure and the god of pride are today disputing the right of Christian truth to rule the minds and hearts of men. <39>

It is against this paganism that Catholic schools stand in unalterable opposition. To the worship of the god of wealth, they oppose the Christian virtue of poverty; to the god of pleasure, they



oppose the Christian virtue of chastity; and to the god of pride, they oppose the Christian virtues of obedience and humility. <40>

Thus the paganism of today, begun in the sixteenth century, is a revival of the paganism of ancient Greece and Rome. The influence of Luther, Descartes and Rousseau are having a terrifying effect upon the modern world. Luther, by substituting private judgment for faith, asserted the supremacy of the individual mind over the authoritative teaching of the Church of God. This rebellious principle has succeeded in destroying the unity of faith which once joined in such a powerful manner the nations of the West. In consequence of this principle, religious sects have multi-



plied upon the earth in bewildering fashion. <41>

The conclusion of the great Cardinal Newman, arrived at some sixty years ago, has been verified in our midst. There is no middle ground between Catholics and unbelief. It is becoming more and more evident in the world in which we live that one is either a Catholic and subscribes to the full round of Christian belief and practice or has completely abandoned it and has become an infidel. According to the principle enunciated by Luther a man may believe what he likes. Those who have followed him have ended by choosing to believe in nothing beyond this visible world. <42>

Descartes, by choosing natural rather than supernatural wisdom, by refusing to recognize the sovereignty of Christian Revelation over the efforts of the fallible human intelligence to achieve truth, is responsible for a principle almost as disastrous, but on a different level from the principle

given by Luther. According to Descartes, a man may think what he likes. This principle has produced anarchy within the realm of natural knowledge.

We shall take but one example in order to make clear to ourselves the manner in which this principle has operated to obscure and confuse truths naturally Christian. We shall take the concept of man, a concept basic and fundamental in so many directions. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth century teacher, the splendor of whose wisdom is illuminating the Church of the twentieth century, whose doctrine is the crystallization of Christian wisdom, man is composed of body and soul. Each requires the other for the perfect living of the natural life. The soul of each member of the human family has been created by God. The soul of each member of the human family is immortal, naturally immortal, destined to live on throughout the eternal years. Descartes, a seventeenth century man, denied the natural union between the soul and the body; and for the human soul he substituted the soul of the angel. Darwin, a nineteenth century man, and all evolutionists after him, substituted for the angelic soul of Descartes the sentient soul of the beast. According to Darwin, man differs neither in origin nor in destiny from the animal. Hegel, like-

wise a nineteenth century man, reduces man's body to mind and tells us that the body is mere appearance. Karl Marx, the prophet of Communism, reduces man to the level of the machine: he is part of the vast mechanism of the universe valuable no longer for what he is, but merely for what he can do. His origin is the animal kingdom; his destiny is the grave. Freud, a twentieth century man and still living, tells us not only that we are animals but that we are animals of low degree; for all our acts, mental as well as physical, have their source and driving power in lust. <43>

This whole diversity of opinion resolves itself into the one principle of Descartes mentioned above, namely, that man may think what he likes. The confusion within the social order which is such a familiar sight today, is but the outward expression of this confusion within the kingdom of the mind from which these social disorders flow.

Rousseau, the third in this triumvirate,

by separating moral conduct from the control and governance of reason, by substituting sentiment and feeling for reason as the arbiter of right and wrong, is responsible for another far-reaching principle, a principle which, like the other two, was handed down from ancient times.

According to this principle, a man may do what he likes. This principle has infected the organs of social life like some subtle poison. It has loosened the bonds which should unite the heads of households, making the continuance of their union dependent no longer upon rational love, once given never to be revoked, but upon sensual love which is as shifting as the sands and as unstable as the wind. It has infected the rel-

ationship between parent and child and has deprived the child of that discipline which should be gently severe, and which is very necessary in the formative years of life. It has infected the entire social order; for it has taught men to regard law as a burdensome yoke rather than as a protecting friend.

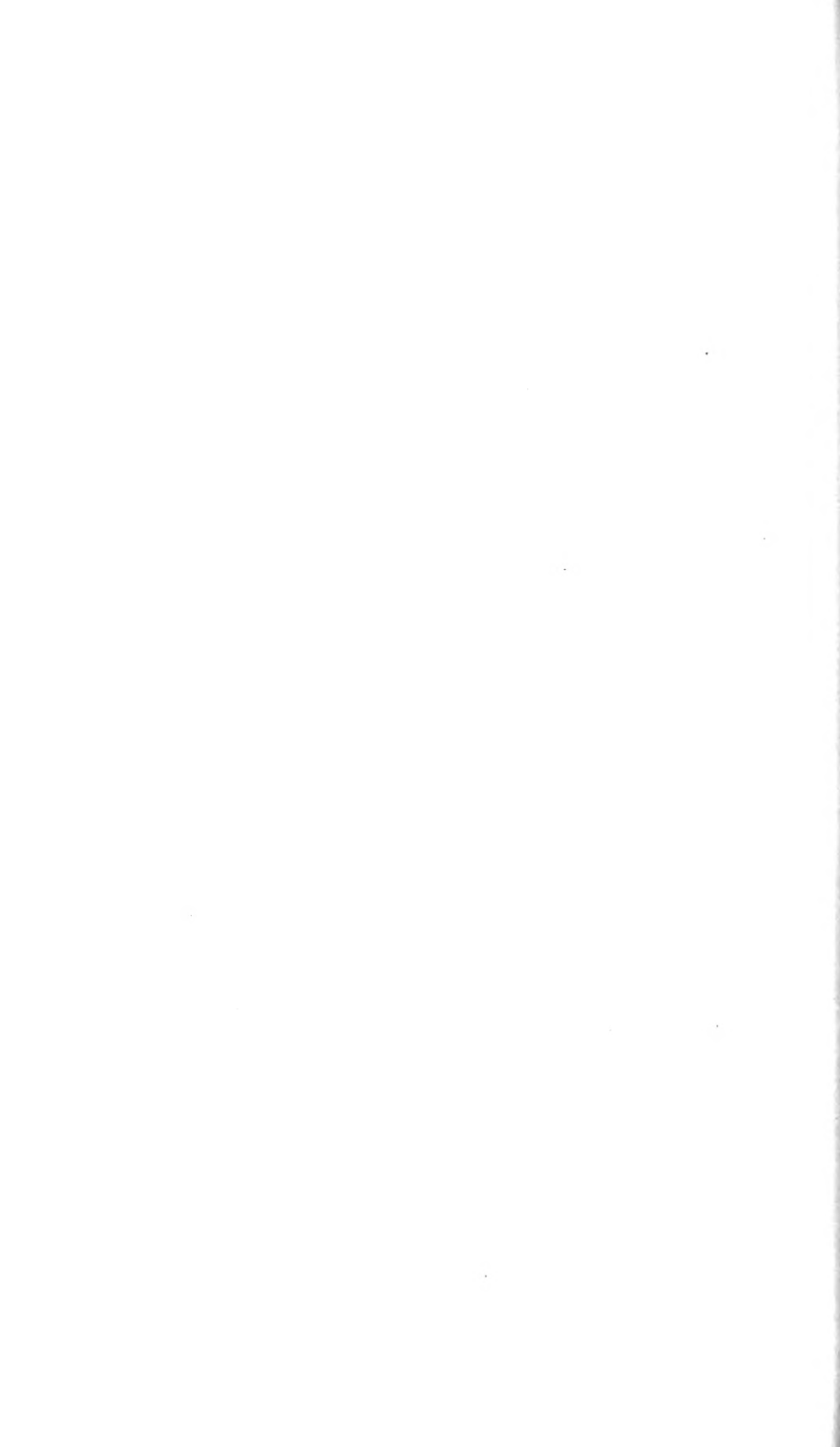
"The rule of law is the rule of reason."

<44>

This principle has also infected the school and has made of it an "intellectual cafeteria, an intellectual self-serve restaurant wherein the child and growing young man and woman is encouraged to pick and choose from the intellectual menu what appeals to his fancy at the moment without regard for either his need or his aptitude." <46>

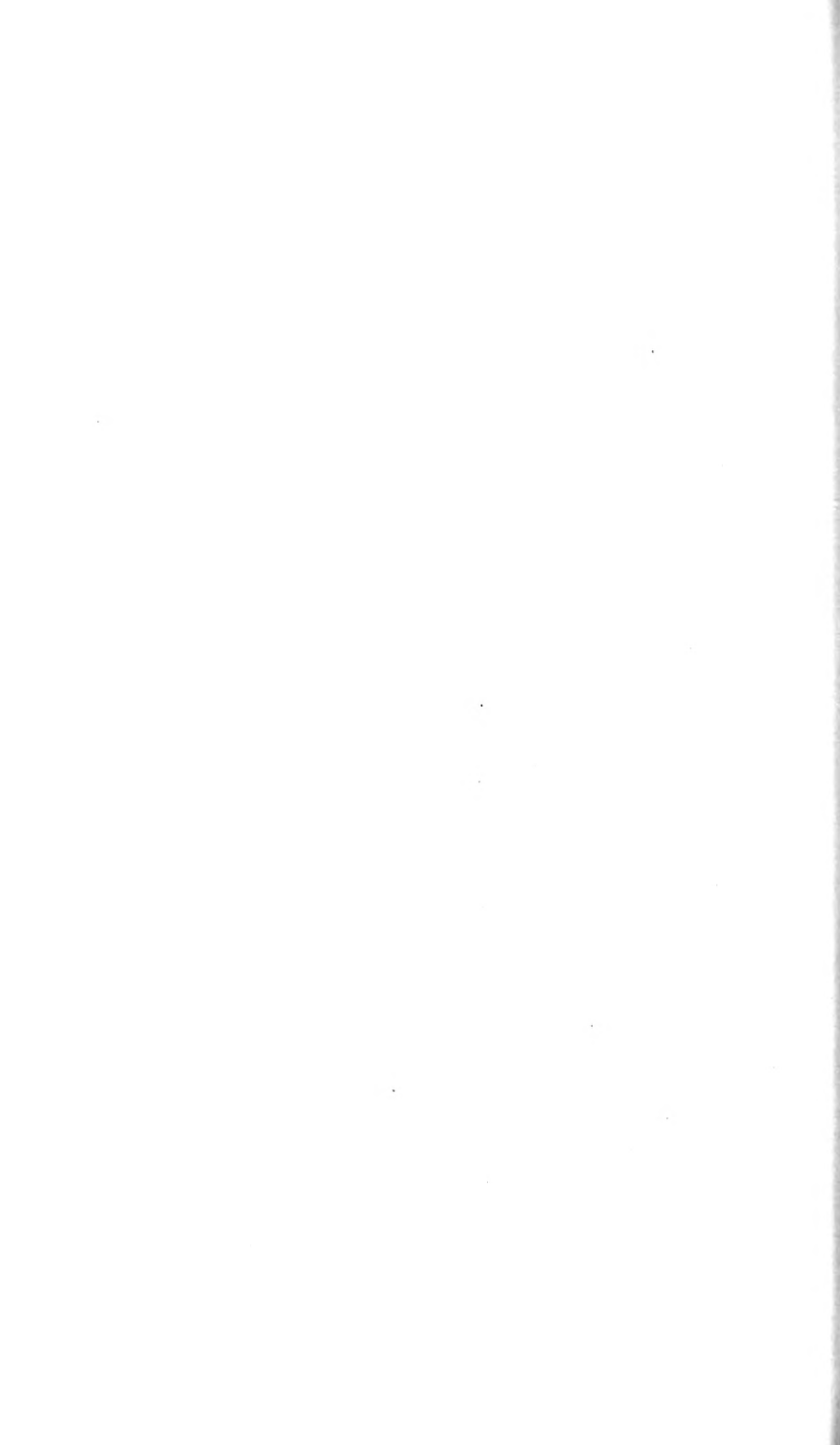
Doctors insist upon the importance of the proper selection of food, a selection which must be controlled by the needs of the body at the different periods of life, and a selection based upon the best findings of medical science. But the child and youth is expected to make, without instruction or guidance, a selection from the variety of courses outlined in our intellectual menu which shall be in accord with his need and aptitude, a task much more difficult than selecting food proper for the body. <46>

According to this new vision of the teaching office, a vision which proved itself to be no more than a mirage produced by the Prince of Darkness again masquerading as an angel of light, the teacher is expected to follow the student. "If," as Father Bellisle puts it, "the doctor were required to follow the patient rather than the patient follow the doctor, physical health would soon be destroyed." <47> Mental health



is being destroyed in ever increasing measure among the youth of our day through improper intellectual feeding and care. Schools must be on guard lest they too be invaded in like manner. In training students, they must hold tenaciously to those disciplines which centuries of experience have proven beyond the shadow of doubt to be proper and necessary in the training and development of the mind. <48>

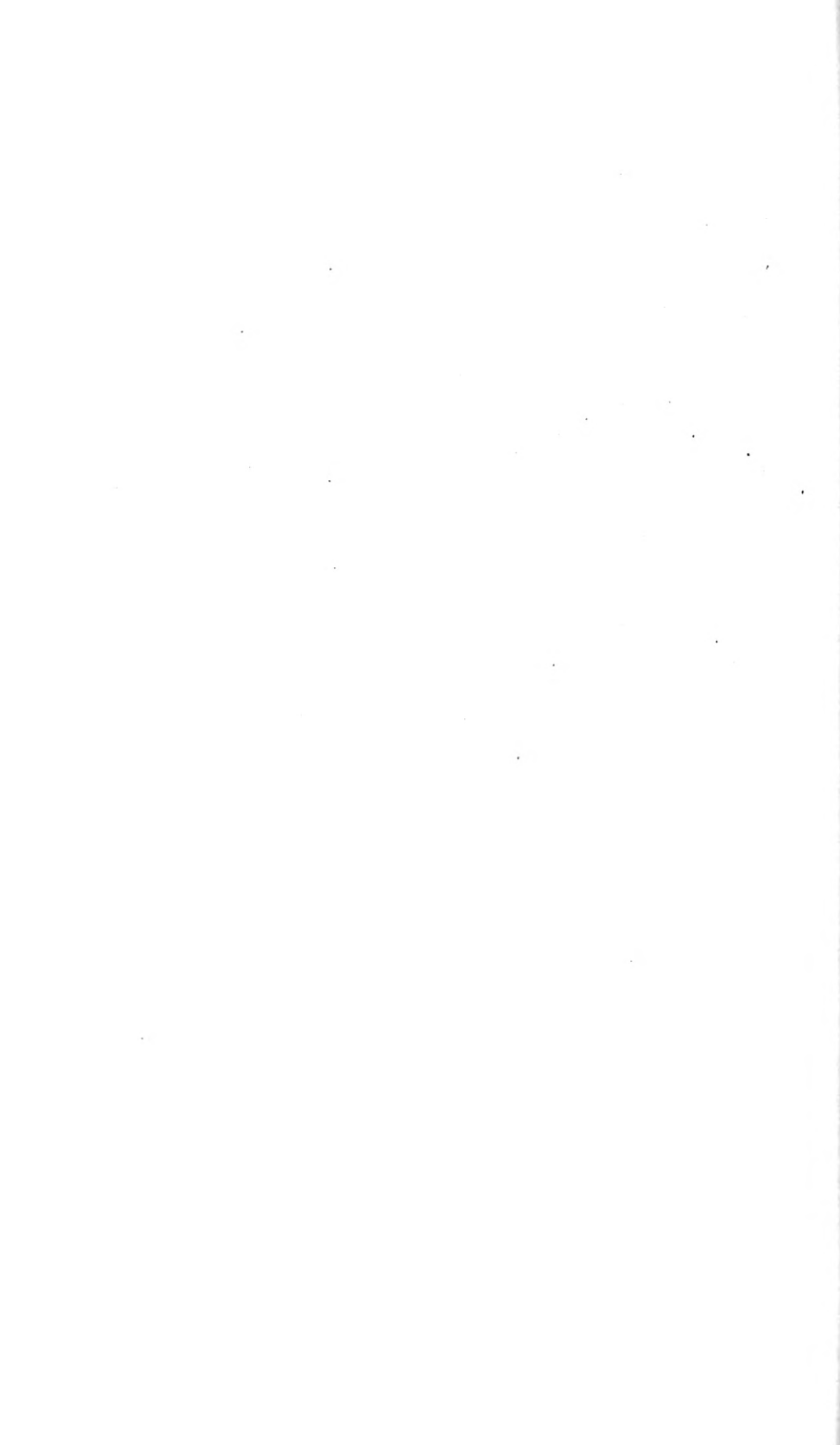
In accord with this principle the moral code is visualized, no longer as something stable and permanent but as changing with the changing order. The laws of morals are no more than the conventions of men. They have no more claim to our obedience than have the rules of etiquette or the styles. It is absurd to think, these modern prophets tell us, that Moses, living as he did three thousand years ago, could have constructed a code of morality suitable for us in the twentieth century. It is equally absurd to think that Jesus Christ, living as He did two thousand



years ago, could have had knowledge and vision of sufficient magnitude to provide men in this century with a satisfactory programme of life.

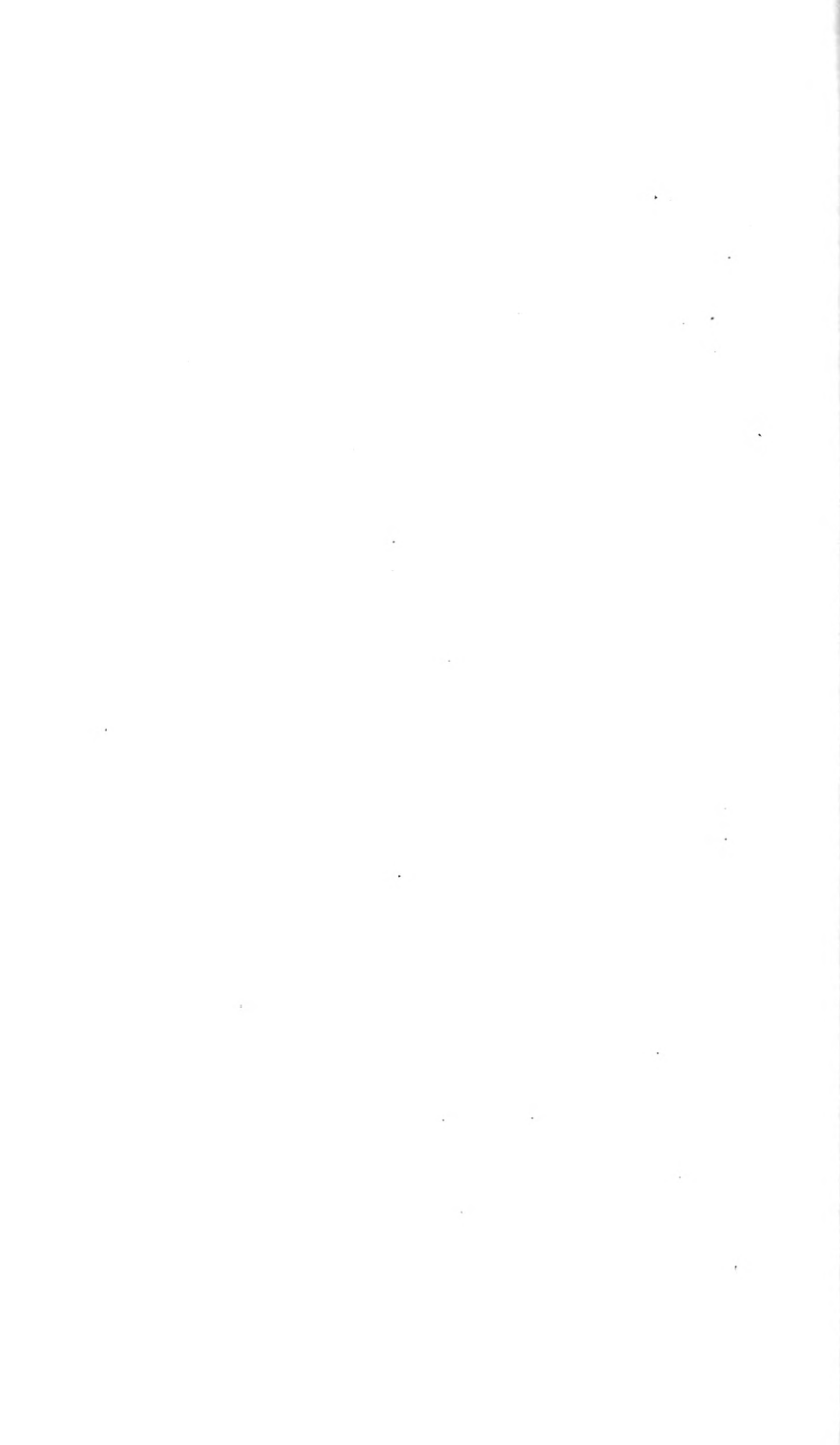
A man may not do what he likes. "For we must all be manifested before the throne of God to give an account of our stewardship." "Every idle word that man shall speak, he shall render an account for it on the day of judgment." "Narrow is the gate and straight the way which leadeth to eternal life and few there are who find it; wide is the gate and broad the way which leadeth to destruction and many there are who go in thereat." The invisible sanctuary of mind and heart must be kept pure and undefiled; for it is the temple of the Holy God. <49>

On one occasion, Father Bellisle was asked what was wrong with the following quotation: "Emotional need assumes priority over intellectual reasoning. There are no purely intellectual decisions affecting behavior." His answer was very significant:



Emotional need is need sponsored by passion. The passions in themselves are neither morally good nor morally bad. They reside in the sentient appetite rather than in the rational will. The sentient appetite is twofold, concupiscible and irascible. By the concupiscible appetite we desire good naturally agreeable to the senses and shun what is harmful. The two principle passions residing in this appetite are joy and sadness, joy in sentient good attained, sadness at sentient good withheld. By the irascible appetite we likewise desire good apprehended by the senses but good difficult to attain. By this appetite we are prompted to remove the obstacles in the way of acquisition of such good. The two principle passions residing in the irascible appetite are hope and fear, hope for the attainment of the good, and fear of the obstacles in the way of such attainment.

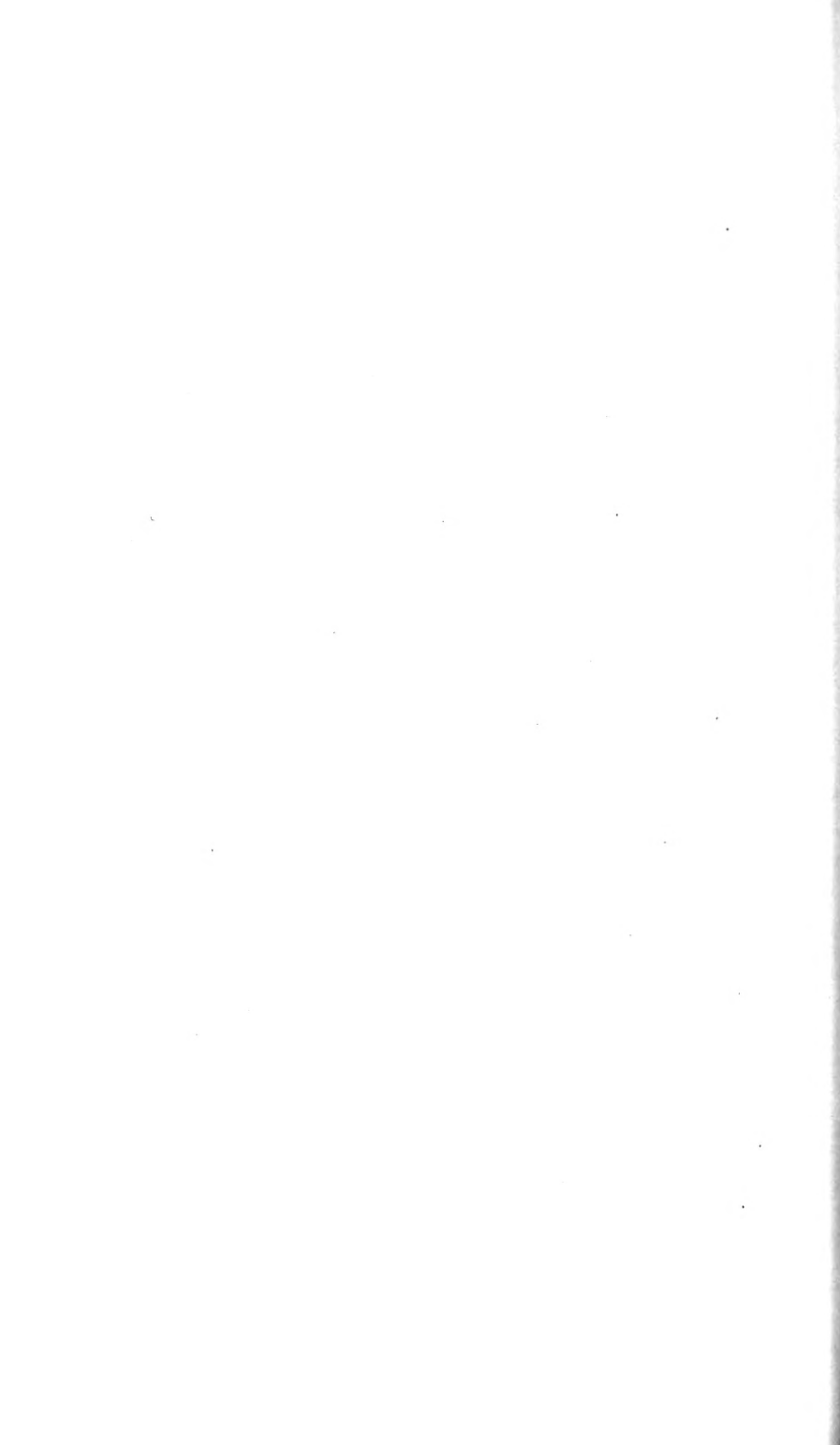
To say that emotional need assumes priority over intellectual reasoning, is to exalt passion over reason, the sentient appetite over the rational appetite. This is to pervert the nature of man who is by definition a rational animal. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that man, perfected by virtue, that is, man disciplined by reason, is the best of animals. He also teaches that man, separated from law and justice, that is, from the rule of reason, is the worst of animals. Man has been



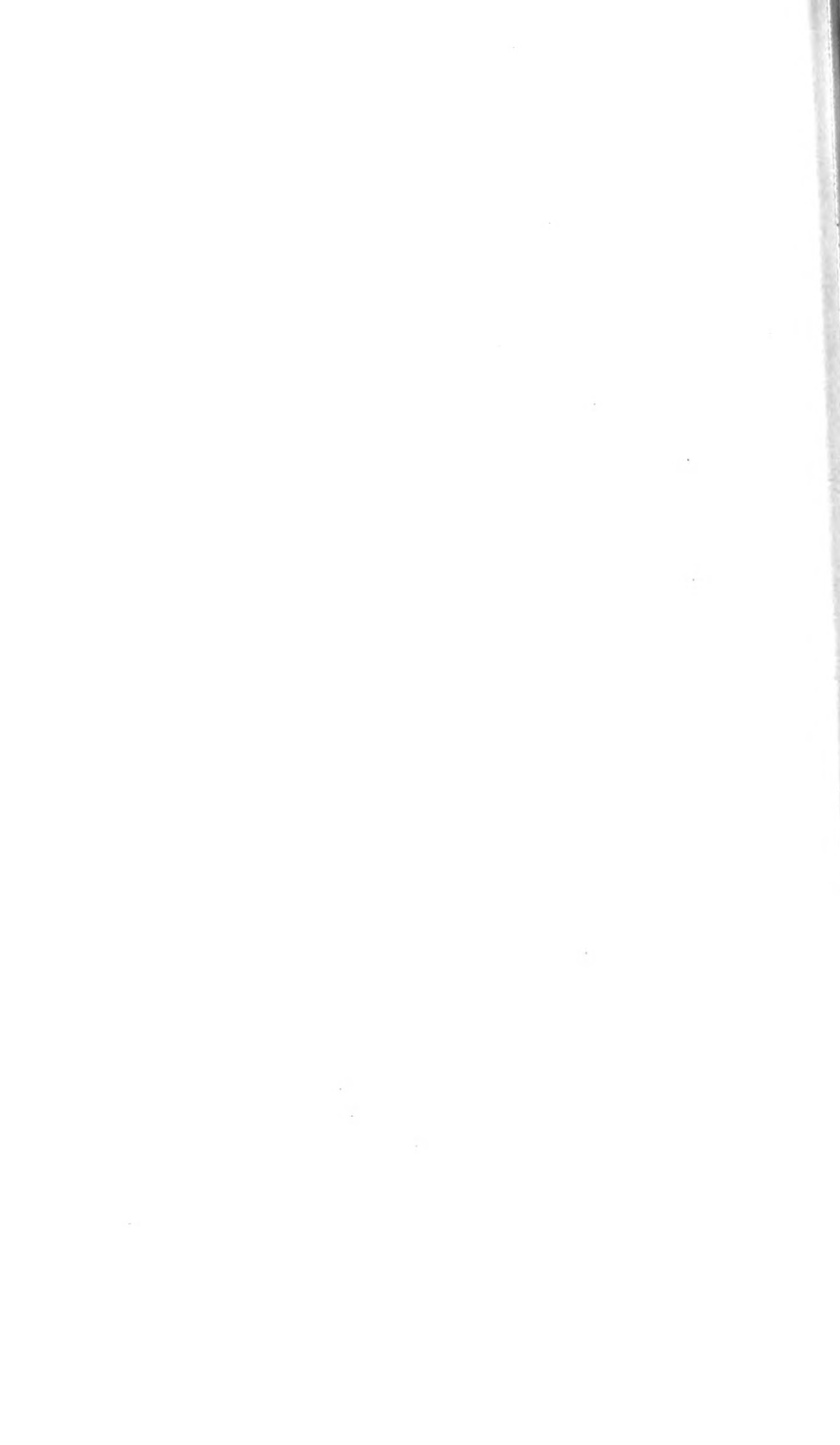
equipped with the arms of reason for the purpose of controlling emotional need. <50>

Then discussing how intellectual decisions can and do affect behavior, he says:

To say that there are no purely intellectual decisions affecting behavior is to subscribe to the description of man given by Descartes. ... According to Descartes, man's mind is ruled by one set of laws and his body by another. Whereas, in the Christian concept of man, the rational soul and body are united in one substantial compound. The rational soul must rule the body. This it does by reason. The body may resist and often does, but it must be brought under subjection by discipline. We chastize our body that we may bring it under the rule of the mind. The decision to fast or abstain is surely an intellectual decision. We carry it into action. Here, surely, and in countless other instances, intellectual decisions influence behavior. The greater control exercised by mind over body, the more perfect our life. <51>



In considering the harm done by modern philosophers, Father Bellisle considers that done by Emmanuel Kant as worthy of special mention. Kant's system of philosophy, brought to perfection by Hegel, has touched at some point or other all the ideas of Western civilization. Father Bellisle claims that Christianity cannot live in the world created by Kant and Hegel. Kant asserts at the outset the inherent goodness of the human will and its power to achieve perfection by its own unaided effort. For Kant, there is no such thing as sin; and hence no place for Christ or His religion. Man is sufficient for himself. There is no need of grace, and no place for prayer.



Accepting Kant and Hegel as the new high-priests of Christendom, Christian leaders outside the Church have expressed and are expressing the teaching of Christ within the Kantian and Hegelian structure. Within such a structure it cannot live. A year or so ago I happened to be in conversation with the head of one of our leading sectarian colleges. I asked him if he believed that Christ is God. He answered that it is a question of interpretation. Then he volunteered this little bit of information which threw light upon the whole situation. "I believe", he said, "that Kant is the greatest interpreter of Christianity." "My people", he continued, "have to rediscover revelation." It is to be rediscovered by fitting it into a new structure. <53>

Christians must recognize that they are in a non-Christian world. The so-called Christian sects have very little of Christianity left in them. Christianity has lost its supernatural character and, outside the Catholic Church, it is regarded as but another contribution on the part of a man to the sum total of

human knowledge. This is now the religion of the "intellectuals". The youth of the land are taught to regard Christ as one of many who have made a contribution to religious thought and experience. Christ is spoken of with reverence, it is true; but it is the same sort of reverence which is shown to Aristotle or to Kant. He is no longer God, but a man filled with the spirit of God, the spirit of a Hegelian God, which is the spirit of this world. <54>

There is one more man who has had a tremendous influence upon education, particularly American education. This man is John Dewey. Dewey came under the influence of such men as Huxley, Hegel, William James and Rousseau. That he became atheistic in his tendencies



was not at all surprising. The Progressive Education Program which he sponsored was a logical outgrowth of his Philosophy. His influence over the American educational system has been very great. His ideas have been given full scope. The results of his educational system are so deteriorating that a few modern educationists are beginning to suspect something wrong with it. There is something wrong, something terribly wrong. Dewey has left God out of education.

A few years ago, Father Cellisio published an article entitled, "Who is John Dewey?" in which he shows, point by point, what great opposition there exists between the philosophy of education of John Dewey and that of the Catholic

Church. So extraordinary is this article, and so important is it for American educationists, that it has been considered advisable to keep it in its entirety. It is therefore reproduced in full in the Appendix to this thesis.

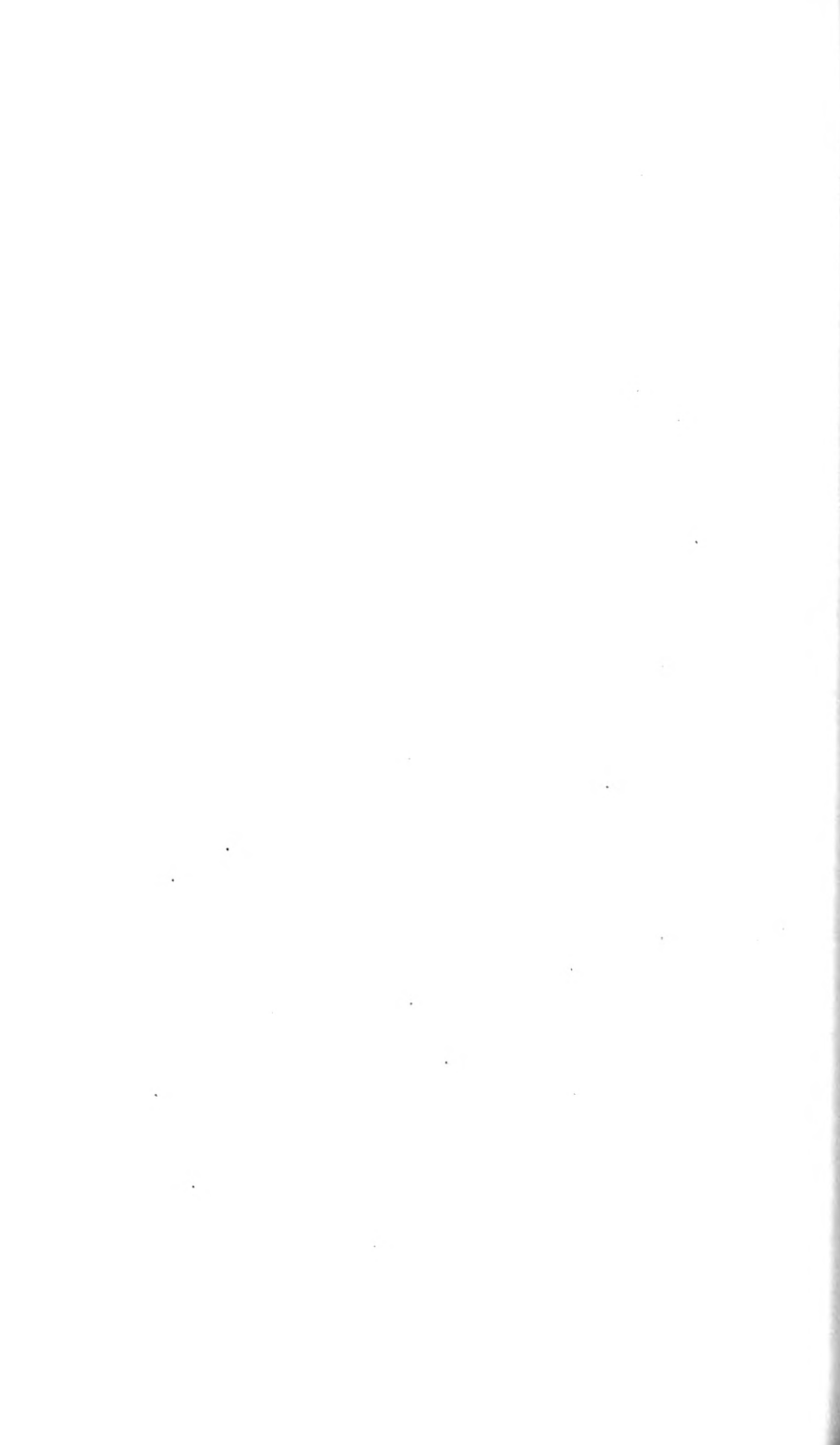
<55>

The modern spirit that has resulted from the work of Descartes, Luther, Rousseau, Kant, Dewey and all the others is the spirit of pride. The self-sufficiency of man, in all departments of human life, is taken for granted. Man has, apparently, only to will strongly enough and all shall be accomplished as he desires. Man is the author of his own destiny. This spirit has received a severe jolt during the past



few years. So many things have happened to shake the self-sufficiency of man that many honest souls are seeking for a solution elsewhere than within man himself. It is the Christian's duty to show the way, by thought and by action. <56>

The Christian asserts, in opposition to all this, that man's nature has been damaged. He introduces the fact of original sin at the outset and the equally important fact, the solidarity of the race. In virtue of this solidarity everyone born into this world inherits the same damaged nature. This nature must be healed by grace. Grace comes from God. He alone can grant it. It flows from the Sacraments into the soul. This grace is the sharing in the life of God, and in virtue of this communication of life men are made the sons of God. Though grace is inexhaustible, it is also gratuitous. Hence the necessity of constant prayer that God may not withdraw it from us but may increase and strengthen it. Grace finds its resting place in the very essence of the soul. It flows over into the faculties, healing and



strengthening them. And with grace come all the infused virtues ruled by charity, their queen. <57>

Catholic schools have been established to safeguard these truths "which like stars in the spiritual firmament are set to guide souls through the semi-darkness of this life into the full light of the kingdom of God", <58> to protect the minds of youth against the invasion of error which destroys the soul, to guide the footsteps of youth in the path of truth, and to protect their young hearts from the seductive lure of vice.

To show how Catholic schools are prepared to offset the evils so prevalent in modern educational institutions, Father Bellisle says in his own inimitable way:

There are three institutions which form an earthly trinity: they are the home, the school, and the Church. Within these three institutions, divinely established — for the school is but the prolongation of the family — human souls are clothed with knowledge and strengthened in virtue. These three institutions are built and maintained by sacrifice, the Christian spirit of sacrifice taught to us by Jesus Christ Himself Who began His life in a stable and ended it upon a cross. Christian homes are usually poor; it was the home of Joseph the carpenter; it is the model for all future Christian homes. Christian homes poor in the possession of this world's goods are rich in spiritual treasure, rich in truth which is heaven born, truth more precious than gold and silver, truth carried to us across the centuries, preserved without change or shadow of alteration by an infallible Church committed to her as a priceless legacy by God Himself. Our schools, in comparison with state schools are often poor; but the poorest equipped Catholic school is better than the best equipped state or Protestant school. The priceless truths taught in the home and in the Church, and the Christian virtues are equally priceless, are developed and strengthened in the Catholic school. <59>

Then, to show how Catholic schools are made possible, to emphasize the sacrifice

at which they are maintained, and to indicate the competency of Catholic school teachers in the fulfillment of their teaching obligation to their students, Father Bellisle goes on to say:

It is the spirit of sacrifice which makes possible Christian schools. The sacrifice of Catholics builds and maintains them. The sacrifice of religious teachers makes possible their continuance. They forego the opportunity of making homes for themselves that they may dedicate themselves to the care and training of Catholic youth. Owning nothing of their own, consecrated to God by the three vows of religion, well trained in the secular sciences, but better trained in Christian truth and practice, manifesting in their saintly lives the Christian virtues, they are bright and shining lights; they are the glory of Christian manhood and womanhood. The schools in which they labour are equipped oftentimes with the bare essentials even as the house of Mary at Nazareth, but the spiritual treasures which they possess and dispense with lavish hand makes of these schools Christian sanctuaries pleasing in the sight of God and the admiration of all men of good will. Our schools are



Christian strongholds; they are the bulwark of Church and State. <60>

Upon one occasion, Father Bellisle was asked if it would not be better to abolish Catholic schools and allow Catholic children to go to the public schools in view of the fact that it is difficult to finance Catholic schools. The inquirer added, too, that public school buildings are more modern, their equipment is better and their teaching more expert. Father Bellisle's reply to this question left no room for doubt in the matter:

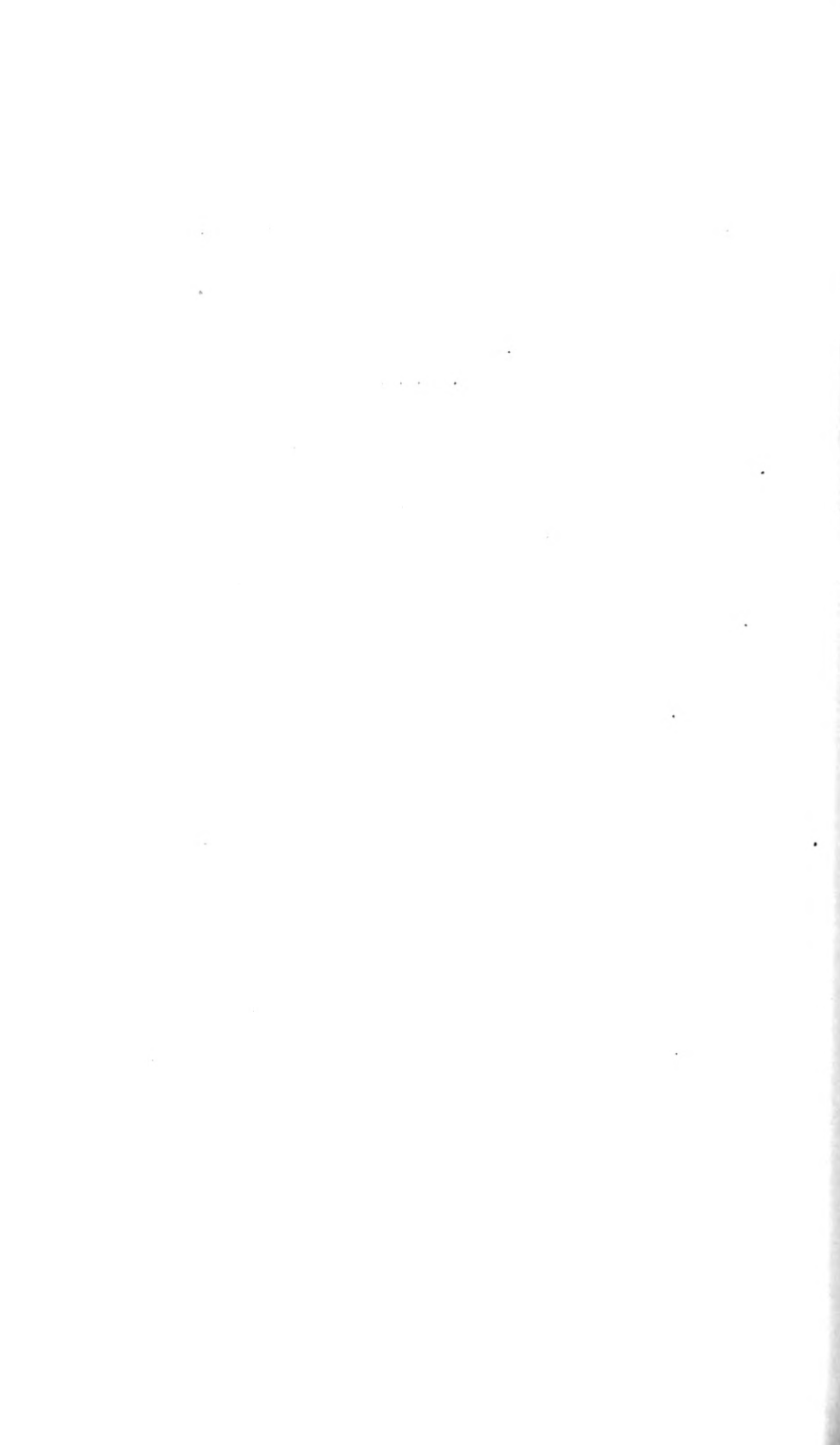
... Teaching is a spiritual ministry. It is a ministry dedicated to assist the soul in its effort to achieve virtue and knowledge. Souls are not developed by buildings, grounds, gymnastic equipment and material goods of such kind but by the discipline of grace and truth. Catholic schools though frequently poor in things material are rich in things spiritual. An educational system



which deletes from its programme the teaching of the great Master of all time, the teaching of the God-man, is neglecting the greatest spiritual heritage ever bequeathed to our race. Catholic schools take full advantage of this teaching. Public schools neglect it entirely. ... Teachers in Catholic schools are not less expert than those in public schools, but more so. Our teachers are trained in the School of Jesus Christ, the greatest of all schools, the training school of saints and scholars without number amongst all nations and generations of men. The spirit of sacrifice which produced Catholic schools will keep them running even when denied secular support. <61>

Upon another occasion, Father Bellisle was asked if Catholics were not "meddling" in politics if they kept insisting on advocating the cause of Catholic schools. In answering this question, he was just as blunt and emphatic as he was in the preceding case:

Pius XI in his encyclical entitled Christian Education of Youth teaches



that Catholics engaged in the work of promoting and defending Catholic schools are doing a genuinely religious work. The associations dedicated to such endeavors are dear to his Paternal Heart. He says, "let it be loudly proclaimed and well understood and recognized by all, that Catholics, no matter what their nationality, in agitating for Catholic schools, are not mixing in party politics but are engaged in a religious enterprise demanded by conscience. They do not intend to separate their children either from the body of the nation or its spirit, but to educate them in a perfect manner, most conducive to the prosperity of the Nation. Indeed, a good Catholic, precisely because of his Catholic principles, makes the better citizen, attached to his country, and loyally submissive to constituted authority in every legitimate form of government." (P. 85 of the encyclical). <62>

Father Bellisle also shows that since it is the proper and immediate end of Christian education to co-operate with Divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, Christian education must take in the whole aggregate of



human life, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ. Because secular schools do not and cannot give such a formation, it is the duty of Catholics to be particular about their Catholic schools. <63>

In the matter of textbooks for Catholic schools, Father Bellisle was insistent. Textbooks, for the most part, are the work of secular educationists. It is only in recent years that Catholics have attempted to put out books for use in Catholic schools. Textbooks can be dangerous if they leave false impressions. For example, a person once asked Father Bellisle why a textbook contain-

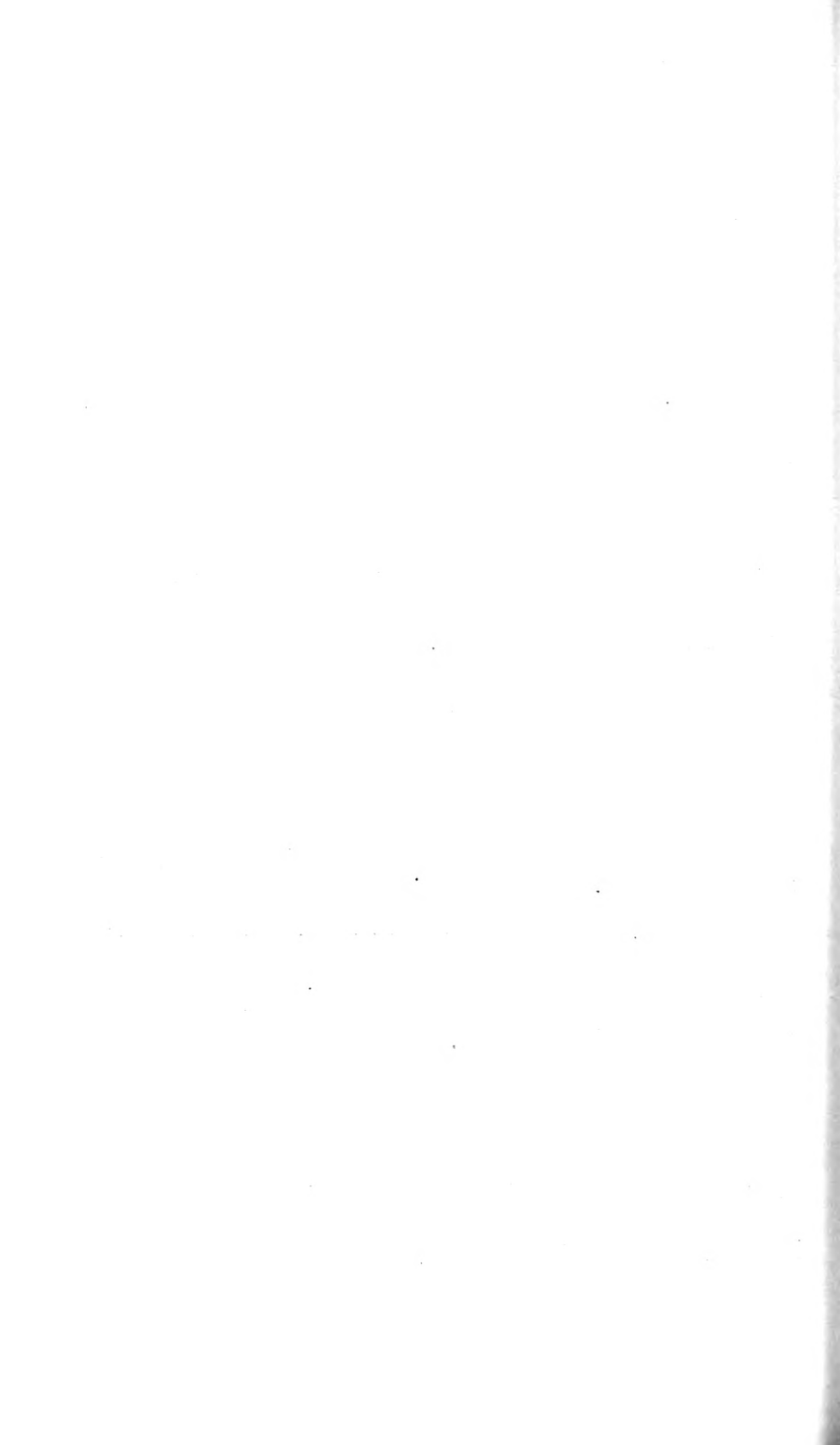
ing theory of a Catholic scholar by the name of St. George Mivart could not be used in Catholic schools. Mivart taught that the soul of man was created directly by God but that his body had come forth from the animal kingdom through a process of evolution. Father Bellisle explained that the Catholic Church teaches that Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, were directly created by God, body and soul. He explained that the souls of the first man and woman were directly created by God, and that this is an article of faith. However, though it has never been explicitly defined that man's body was directly created by God, this is regarded by theologians as the common and true position. To hold the contrary would be regarded as rash.



The position of Mivart being opposed to the obvious interpretation of the account of creation given by Moses in the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis, is regarded as extremely risky. He goes on to say that the Sacred Congregations have practically condemned this opinion by forbidding Catholic writers to defend it. He ends his explanation by saying:

Leroy and Zahm who defended this position were ordered to withdraw their books from circulation. Haeckel's statement which appeared in his Riddle of the Universe, that "man's immediate descent from the apes is an historical fact", has been stigmatized as false and absurd by reliable scientists. <64>

Before leaving this subject of the role played by Catholic schools in the training of Catholic youth, there is one



other point of great importance. So far, Father Bellisle has considered the problem from the point of view of defending the existence of Catholic schools. He now goes a step further, and says that it is not only a good thing for Catholics to send their children to Catholic schools, but that it is necessary for them to do so. According to Canon Law, parents are under the grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can. <65>

Father Bellisle explains this as follows:

This duty cannot be fulfilled by parents unless they send their children to Catholic schools where such are available. Pius XI makes this clear in his Encyclical of December, 1929, on Christian Education ... The following are a few of the

important principles enunciated there. The page notations are taken from the translation of the America Press, New York.

1. It is the duty of parents to refuse to send their children to those schools where there is danger of imbibing the deadly poison of impiety.

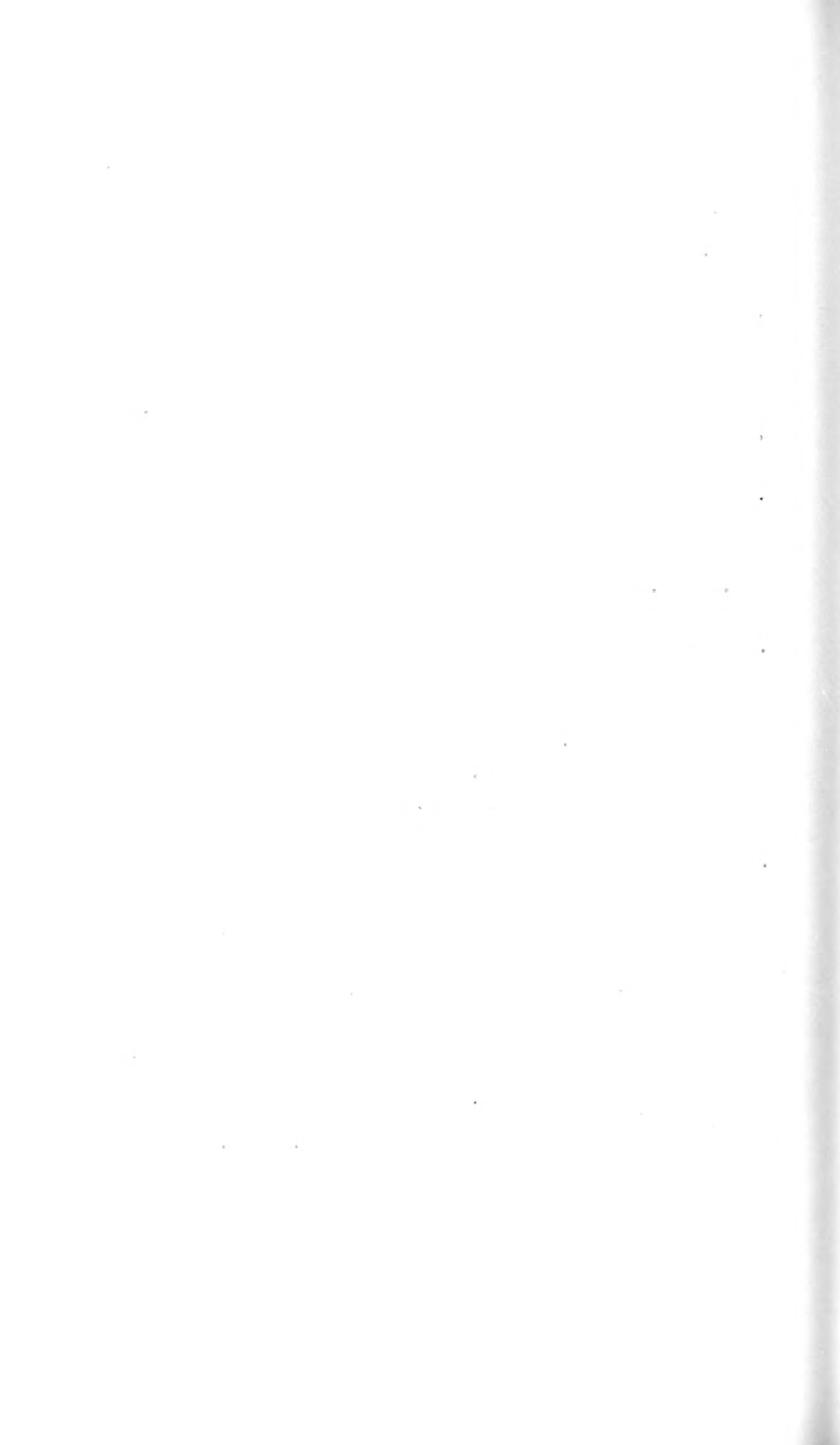
p. 70

2. The mission of education belongs primarily to the Church and the family and this by natural and divine law. p. 71

3. The so-called neutral or lay school from which religion is excluded is contrary to the fundamental principles of education. Such a school cannot exist in practice. It is bound to become irreligious. p. 83

4. It is true as Leo XIII has wisely pointed out that without proper religious and moral instruction, every form of intellectual culture will be injurious. Young people, not accustomed to respect God, will be unable to bear the restraint of a virtuous life and, never having learned to deny themselves anything, they will be easily incited to disturb the public order. p. 67

<66>



Chapter 3

FATHER BELLISLE'S PHILOSOPHY OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL
EDUCATION

As an administrator, we shall probably not look upon his like again. Under his guidance as Principal for eight years the High School made a distinct advance in the art of forming Catholic youth, and what was very close to his heart, maintained and improved its reputation as a nursling of vocations to the priesthood. The High School which he attended as a boy was and always remained his first love and he was particularly anxious that all the boys of the city who desired a Catholic education should be offered it, whatever their ability to pay fees might be. To this end he acted as Superior a few days later, lowering the fees and establishing East and West End branches of the High School in Toronto. This generous policy had unfortunately later to be abandoned. <1>

It was characteristic of Father Bellisle to be associated very intimately



with every student who came under his care. He felt that he could not do justice to a student unless he first knew his complete background. Knowing this, he was able to understand and sympathize with students whose lack of success or whose apparent unfriendliness would otherwise have been difficult to comprehend.

No two boys are alike. One boy is not equal to one boy. They come to us from homes which are different, from environment which is different. They have different religious preparation and so they cannot all be treated alike. They have, too, individual characteristics which must be taken into account in our dealings with them. <2>

Father Bellisle believed in the personal influence of the teacher who should cultivate a high-minded and holy intimacy with his students, in order that, by



earning their confidence, they might the more readily influence the students towards virtue. <3> This was, perhaps, especially true of students who were handicapped by poverty in their struggle for an education. <4>

He held that organized, competitive sport plays an important role in education, not merely for the physical, but especially for its moral value — training the student to hold his temper and keep steady under fire, training him in his resourcefulness and leadership and co-operation with others in a common cause. It trained the student also in loyalty to his fellow-students. Of course, it was a means to an end, and not an end in itself. It ranked second to intellectual and moral train-

ing, and was infact a means to them.

<5>

St. Michael's has an enviable reputation

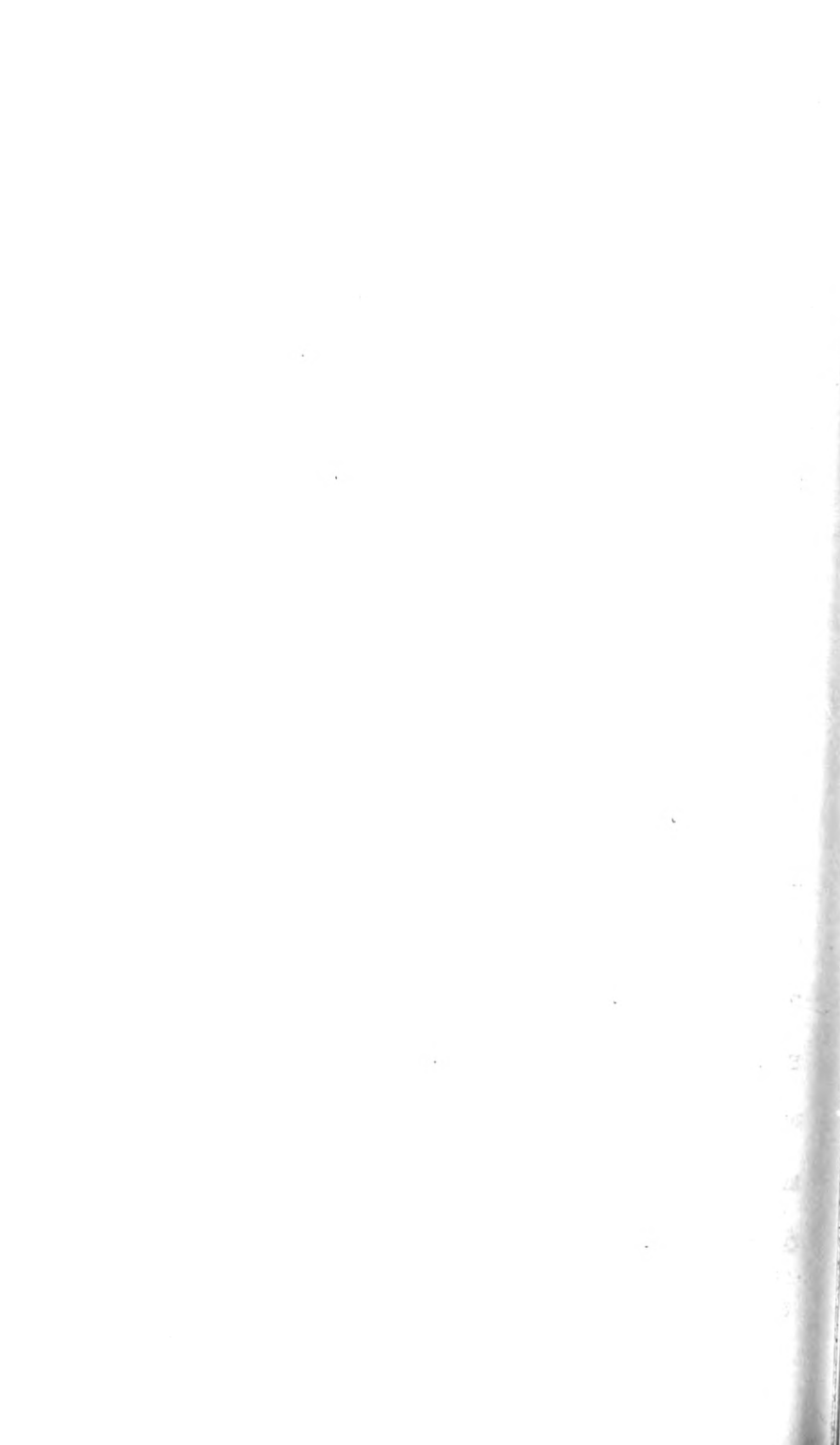
in athletics. What Father Bellisle contributed as an athlete to this reputation has already been mentioned, but it must also be recorded that as a member of the staff he guided and enhanced the glory of its athletic name for fifteen years. The courage, the resourcefulness, the fighting spirit which marked him as a player he was able to inspire as a coach in the teams under his supervision. But, above all, he made athletics subserve higher moral ends, and was zealous to cultivate through this medium the spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice without which real success in athletics, success which has little relation to the mere winning of the games, is impossible.

<6>

Regarding methods of teaching and planning of curricula, Father Bellisle was always very careful to weigh their good points as well as their weaknesses. He was perfectly willing to adopt any new methods or subject curricula as long as

they were not prejudicial to his philosophy of education. In fact, if the innovations were of merit, he was the first to recognize this fact. However, he did not hesitate to condemn when condemnation was necessary.

A few years ago, the Ontario Department of Education issued a new "Programme of Studies" devised for teachers in the elementary and secondary schools of Ontario, which seemed very pagan in its implications. Father Bellisle instantly undertook to write a vigorous criticism against it. He claimed at the very outset of his criticism, however, that he was not attempting to evaluate the motives of the men responsible for the document. He was quite ready to believe



that they had the best interests of the students at heart. Yet he was not sure that they understood the full significance of the words they wrote. His criticism is purely objective, that is, he takes the words they used in their strict and formal meaning, and pressed these words to reveal the consequences of such principles when put into action. He claimed that, since this document was official and public, it must necessarily assume responsibility for the meaning conveyed. <7>

The following positions are definitely taken. Knowing and doing are identified. The method advocated and prescribed for the teacher is the method of nature. The moral code is made dependent upon public opinion. Evolution is assumed as the only defensible position able to explain the origin of man upon earth. The feature of the program is more in evidence when we come to examine that section devoted to social studies. In



the books recommended for supplementary reading to the children, the first man is no longer Adam but Uk or Rud or some such fictitious person. He is the first man to appear upon the earth, awakening one fine morning to find himself no longer an animal but a man. The account given by Moses in the Book of Genesis is apparently no longer defensible.

<8>

The introduction to the "Programme of Studies", he considers an attack upon the mind of the Catholic teacher and child. <9> His reason for saying this is that, to make the "Programme" appear innocent, a sort of sugar coating to a bitter pill is included when almost a whole page is dedicated to the place of religion in the school. This, Father Bellisle claims, is so foreign to the spirit of the rest of the document that it really does not belong there. <10> He says that the "Programme" regards health as no less important for national

life than the inculcation of the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty. <11>

As for the main body of the "Programme of Studies", Father Bellisle takes issue chiefly with three points.

The first is that knowing and doing are identified. The text of the document reads as follows: "This activity comprises knowing and doing which are to be regarded as synonymous terms, each of which implies purposeful effort." Knowing and doing are by no means synonymous terms. Between knowing and doing there is a wide gap which separates theoretic activity and a substitution of practical activity. This elimination of theoretic activity as the only justifiable activity of man is the error of Karl Marx, the prophet of Communism. According to Karl Marx, the child is no longer valuable for what he is, but for what he can do. <12>

Father Bellisle then pointed out that this principle, carried out in practice and pursued to its logical conclusions, would justify the invasion of the rights



of a person in a variety of directions. For example, mercy killing, the elimination of weak members of the human family, both physical and mental, all would be justified and made to appear reasonable according to such a principle. The individual would no longer be important. But the human race is important and so it could do whatever it liked. "Unfortunately for this theory and fortunately for us," says Father Bellisle, "we have a mind, an intelligence whose highest achievement is not action, but manifests itself, not in doing, but in seeing. To contemplate truth, to feed upon it, to possess it, is the highest activity of man." <13> So it is that, just as the eye of the body is made for seeing, for the appreciation of the things of visible

beauty, so the eye of the mind is the mind of intelligence, separating human beings from animals, The teacher must keep this in mind if he would minister properly to human intelligence. <14>

We pas on now to the second point, which states: "In short, the school must follow the method of nature, stimulating the child through its own interests and guiding him into experience useful for the development and satisfaction of his needs." This is the doctrine of John Jacques Rousseau, the enemy of reason. Rousseau substituted feeling and sentiment for reason as a guide of human life. The instinctive promptings of nature are, according to Rousseau, invariably good. According to Rousseau, we are no longer the life of reason, but the life of senses. In accord with this principle, restraint, discipline in educational practice should be reduced to a minimum. The child should not be thwarted or checked, but allowed to follow unhampered and unimpeded the promptings of his nature. The teacher should follow the child, not the child the teacher.

Man is naturally superior to the animal. ... What makes man superior is his reason. Reason should and must control conduct. Reason as possessed by the



child is still in an undeveloped state, just as the bodily powers of the child are weak and require proper food and exercise in order to develop. So too is it with the reason of the child. The reason which must rule the school room is not the undeveloped reason of the child, but the developed reason of the teacher. By conforming to that order, the child's reason is strengthened and developed so that it learns to do now with difficulty what later it will do with joy and thankfulness.

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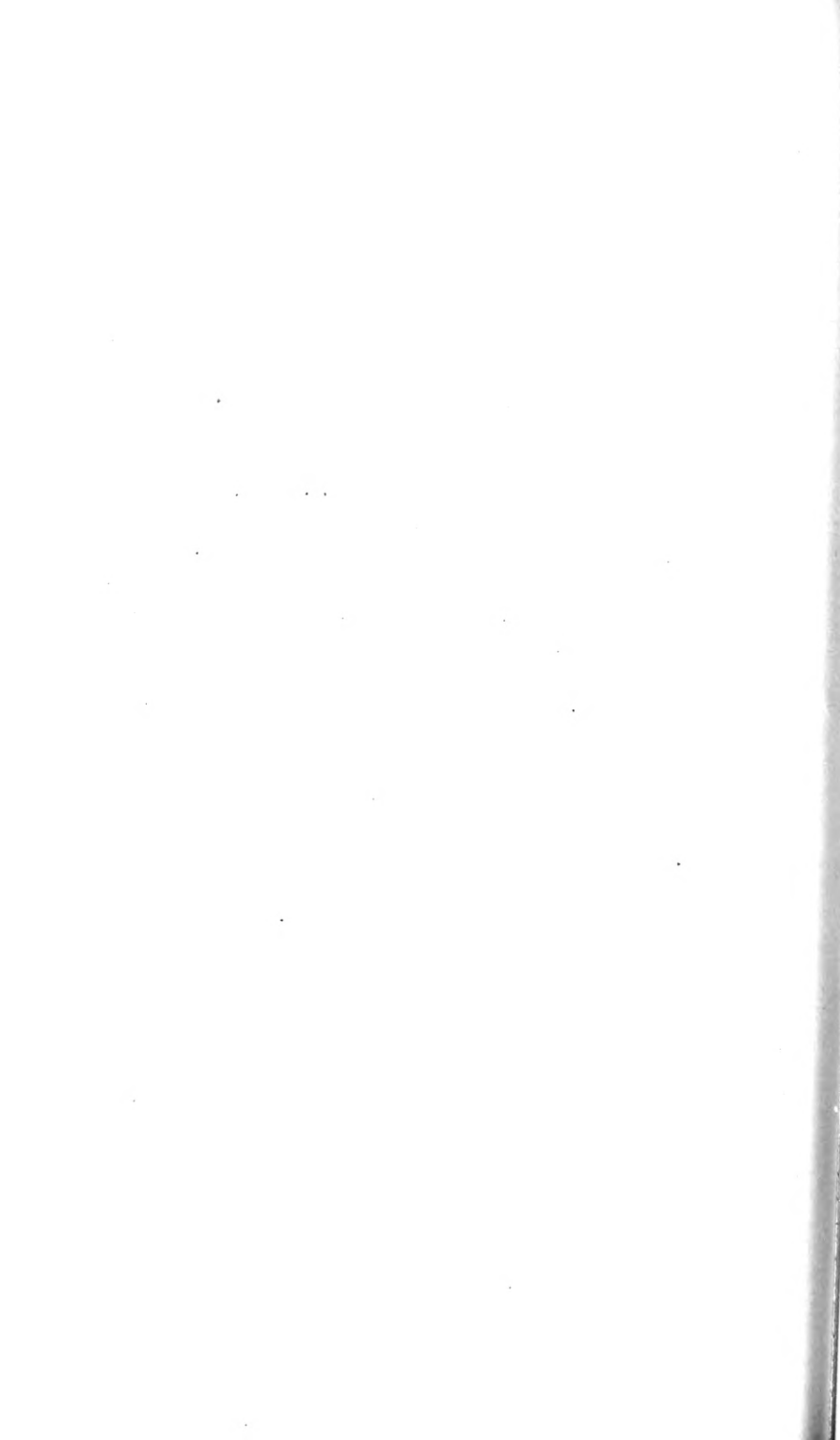
Modern educational trends are all in the direction of the elimination of discipline in the school. If, after centuries of experience, teachers have failed to discover that human nature is neither entirely good nor entirely bad, that it needs discipline in order to be properly formed to social life, then educationists have only themselves to blame for their many and frequent failures. Father Bellisle shows that it



is the lack of discipline in both home and school that is responsible for the alarming increase in juvenile crime and that the responsibility for this rests, in large measure, upon educators. <16>

The third and last point ... is, "The child must needs live, live with his fellows, and live as they approve." If you or I were writing this sentence, we would word it, I think, "The child needs to live, to live with his fellows, and to live not as they approve but as God approves." The present form of the statement means this: it means that moral standards vary as the rules of etiquette or the styles. The laws of morals are no more than the conventions of men. Public opinion shifting as the sands and as unstable as the wind, is the arbiter of moral conduct. <17>

Father Bellisle explains that this theory is the evolutionism of Darwin introduced into the order of conduct. According to this theory standards of conduct change with the changing order of human events. What was right in one



period of the world's history is not necessarily right today. What is right and wrong must be determined by public opinion. This makes public opinion the judge of the rectitude of human conduct or the lack of it. However, the Catholic Church teaches that the moral order of today must be governed as in the past by the ten commandments which declare man's duty to God, to his neighbor and to himself. <18>

This opposition to the "Programme of Studies" was certainly well founded. Father Bellisle felt it his duty to combat the pernicious principles that impregnated the whole document. His keen mind went to the logical conclusions that must follow from the acceptance of such false principles. He felt



obliged to intervene. Needless to say, the "Programme" was accepted very cautiously by the secondary and elementary school teachers, both religious and secular, who came under his influence, and they were many.

Chapter 4

FATHER BELLISLE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The mind must be fed with knowledge, knowledge of the things of God, in order that it may grow and increase in strength and be a safe and satisfactory guide for the will. <1>

The acquisition of knowledge, then, knowledge of the things of God, is a very vital step in the educative process. But just how does one go about acquiring this knowledge? What things are to be studied? What is the subject matter to be undertaken in the quest for this knowledge? Father Bellisle was well aware of the preponderance of enthusiasm for the natural and mathematical sciences which is so prevalent today. He recognized their importance, but did not elevate them to a position

above their natural setting in the realm of knowledge. Each teacher, no matter what the subject matter of his particular branch of knowledge might be, was to keep before him at all times the relative position of his science to the whole field of sciences.

Father Bellisle had a special liking for the classics, because he felt that the Church has always been interested in the Greek and Roman classics as part of the training for the Christian.

<2>

The Greek and Roman classics are the flowerings of the human reason. They show us fallen nature at its best. The moral structure of Aristotle, for example, is magnificent, but it was never achieved by any of the Greeks, including himself. To achieve it, human nature must be healed by grace. The grace of God must be communicated to the souls of men before the development



contemplated by Aristotle is possible. The state constructed by Socrates was, his opponent said, a state hung in the clouds. It would never be trodden by human feet. It was an ideal, something towards which fallen nature might look. To so perfect human nature and make it fit to dwell not in the ideal state of Socrates, but in the kingdom of Christ, such was, is and shall always be, the aim of the Church of God. The mission of the Church is to lead men to God, to enable them to save their souls, to enable them to achieve the virtue so well described by Aristotle, and to rise beyond it. Perhaps this is the reason why she has been so partial to the classics. <3>

The Christian teacher must respect the mind of his student and must aim at aiding him in the acquisition of knowledge. He himself must love the truth because it is the truth. Truth is the object of the human mind; it is the bonum intellectus, the good which the intelligence desires. So the Christian teacher must present things certain as



as certain, things doubtful as doubtful. He must be intellectually honest. He must show the student the hierarchy of knowledge and point out to him the degrees of certitude possible on each level. <4>

He knows, for example, as Father Bellisle states:

... that the historian in recording and interpreting events, moves not in the realm of certainty, but in the realm of probability. He is conscious of the weakness of mathematics when applied to religion or social life. He is aware of the tentative character of political theory and so-called economic laws. He does not exalt an art or a science beyond itself, but allows it to find its natural level within the family of sciences and arts which minister to the perfection of human life. He puts first things first because they are first, not because he wishes them to be so. <5>

Father Bellisle had the happy faculty

of doing just this, putting first things first. It was not merely principle with him, but one which he constantly exercised in practice. He, himself, taught philosophy for a good many years of his life, but he never lost contact with all the other phases of knowledge both human and divine.

He was particularly enthusiastic about the progress being made at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto. While Superior of St. Michael's College, he did everything in his power to encourage this work. In fact, for three or four years, he held a professorial position at that Institute. <6> He even wrote a pamphlet on the work that is being done there, so eager was he to inform others of

the Christian scholarship that emanates from that institution. He longed to see a truly Christian and Catholic world. Perhaps he felt that this was, in part, a beginning. Quoting from the 1931-1932 Syllabus of the Institute, he says:

The Middle Ages have left us innumerable memorials in architecture, in stained glass, in needle work, in sculpture, in social customs, and in every line of endeavor, so incomparably perfect in their kind that the man of today is asking: 'Give us back the men and women who could produce such works.' They can only be re-created here on earth when men think and feel as they then thought and felt. To this end we must first understand their thoughts and feelings.

For the Catholic there should be indefinitely more than this. He sees a faith and a practice of that faith which should make him cry: 'Give us again such faith as that.'

Indeed, it looks as if religion, more than anything else, and certainly nothing that excludes religion, will



explain the wonderful beauty of mediaeval life. An understanding of the Middle Ages will require an understanding of the minds of the men of those times. We must enter their souls and look around, and then look out upon the world and other men and see as they saw. Since this is so, who is equipped so well as a Catholic to understand the Middle Ages and make them understood by others?

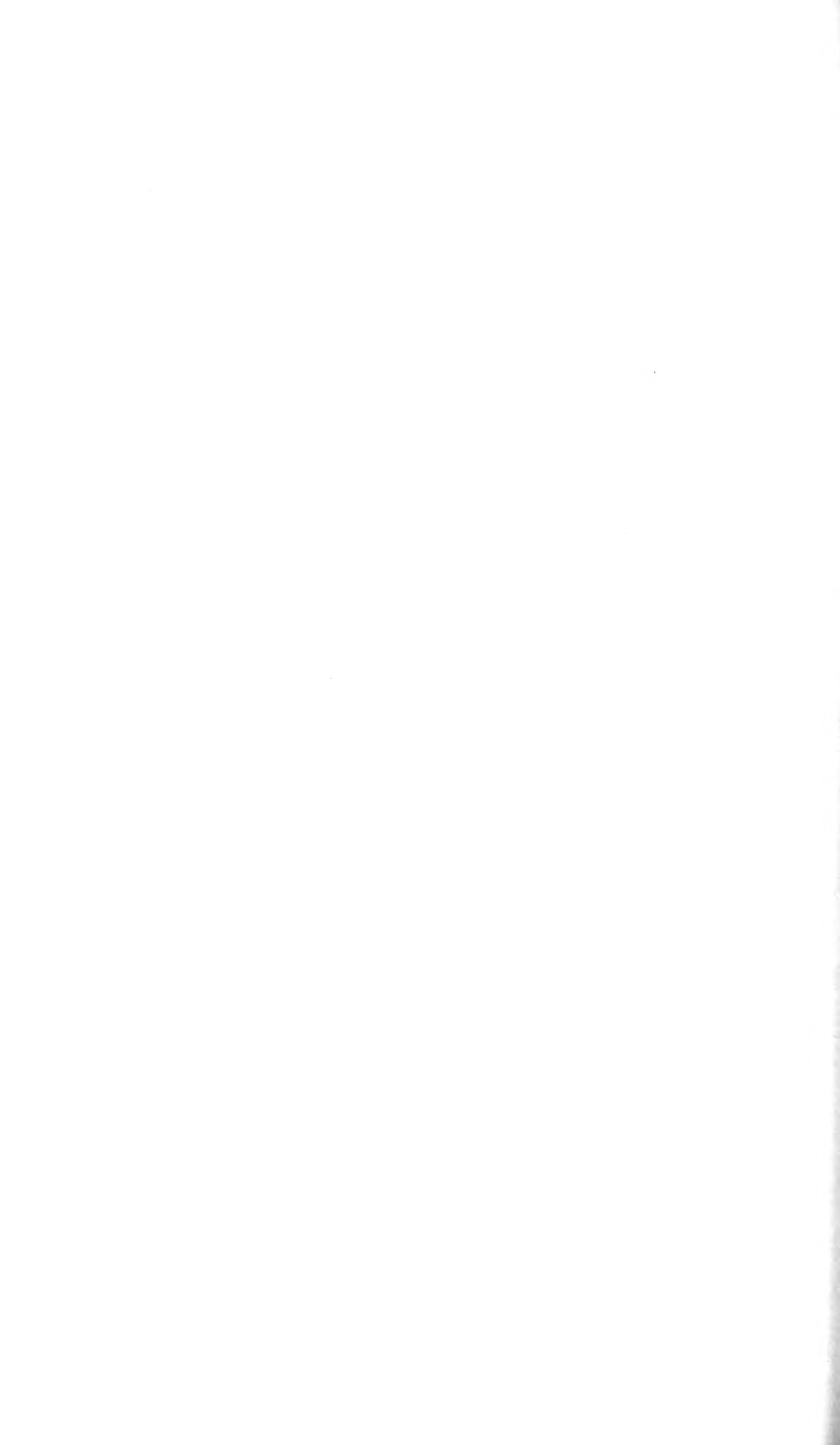
Such is the end aimed at by the Institute of Mediaeval Studies. It is the first of its kind on this Continent or in the Old World. Much work has been done, and is, in ever increasing volume, being done in Europe and the United States. But this is the first Institute founded with the sole aim of trying to understand the mediaeval mind and interpret it to the modern world. <7>

To accomplish this end, a number of Basilians were sent to study in the greatest universities of Europe, and thousands of books dealing with the Middle Ages have been purchased and are now being used for intense research.

<8> The results of their studies have



long since begun to bear much fruit. Great interest is being shown by other scholars from this continent and from the Old. <9> Who knows what may result from this work begun in Toronto? Perhaps Father Bellisle's dream will some day be realized -- the dream of a truly Christian and Catholic culture pervading the whole world.



Chapter 5

RELIGION AND THE OFFICE OF TEACHING

When the Roman Empire began to disintegrate and the uncivilized hordes from the North and East swept over Europe, it was the Church who tamed and disciplined them to the yoke of civilized life. It was the Church who opened their minds closed to truth, natural as well as superantural, and enabled them to build the culture of the West. It was a culture and civilization in which religion touched and transformed every phase and department of human life. Chapels, shrines, churches and cathedrals, built of stone and marble, manifesting a new style of architecture, distinctly Christian, endowed with statues and paintings still the

admiration of those who love true beauty, give evidence of the faith and piety of the people of those ages. The arts and sciences, unknown as yet to those primitive peoples, were developed amongst them, under the inspiration and guidance of the Church. <1>

The monasteries were not only training schools for the development of the Christian virtues, but their doors were open to all students who wished to come. Out of these monastic schools developed the great mediaeval universities, the University of Paris, of Oxford, of Munich, and of others too numerous to mention. The universities of today are modelled after these mediaeval institutions of learning. Then it was that one of her saints sat upon the throne of France and guided its destinies in accord with Christian principles of government. Then it was that St. Thomas Aquinas appeared, a new light in the intellectual firmament, to illumine our future generations. <2>

The civilization of the West, built under the influence and guidance of

the Church, was a truly Christian civilization and culture. Christendom was a family of nations, each sovereign independent, but united by a common faith in the Christian God, a common hope for eternal life and a mutual charity. <3>

St. Thomas Aquinas, looking out upon the world of his day, holding before his mind's eye the history of men and nations of the past made this profound observation. Himself the apostle of human reason, but of human reason disciplined and controlled by Christian truth, which is from above, he observed that human reason left to itself, when examined historically, has been a principle of division rather than of union amongst men and nations. Faith succeeded where reason had failed. Were he living in our day he would have had additional proof of the truth of his observation. <4>

Then Father Bellisle proceeds to show how the world made an attempt at some sort of union by forming a League of

Nations. This League was formed to protect civilization against the horrors of war. It was a League formed on the assumption that men, being rational, will agree to arbitrate their differences before the tribunal of pure reason, a League from which religion was deliberately excluded, and therefore one which has ended in dismal failure. <5>

The unity of Christendom was a triumph of faith correcting human reason from its excesses and from the tyranny of passion, whether it be the passion of greed or of fear. Christendom was the fulfillment within the social order, in a manner truly magnificent, of the prayer of Jesus Christ: "that they may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee." <6>

The unity achieved by Christendom was not only a triumph of faith, it was likewise a triumph of charity. That

men, differing so widely in race, in language, in environment and social conditions, should be so closely united in all that concerns the common good of mankind, as they were in those ages, is a triumph which had its origin and its strength in a gift from God the Father Himself and granted to men in answer to the prayer of His Divine Son Who became a member of the human race.

The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is nowhere better manifested than in this and similar triumphs. Our Lord intended that it should be so. For He Himself makes charity the mark and the sign whereby His disciples shall be known. "By this shall men know that you are My disciples that you have love for another" ... This unity — such unity as was achieved in the ages of Faith — is to be a sign that He Who established this Church, the source and spring of sure unity, has Himself come forth from God and that His religion is not human but divine.

A man living in those ages was at home anywhere in Europe. He was not handicapped even by the barriers of language; for the Latin tongue gave him access to the minds of men as the sign of the cross gave him access to the Church of God.

He was a Christian and a Catholic and so was always in his Father's house. He belonged to the household of the faith. Christendom was the fulfillment of the dream of St. Augustine expressed in his immortal work the City of God, in the fifth century of the Christian era ... <8>

Now contrast this situation with the world today. There is a definite lack of unity, of faith and of charity.

What is responsible for this change?

What has destroyed the unity of Christendom and brought Western civilization to the brink of destruction? Certainly



it is the subjection of the spiritual to the temporal, a destination finally achieved in response to the pride, ambition and greed of men.

St. Thomas a Becket saw the danger and paid for his protest with his blood. Preferring to obey God rather than men, he had the courage and the fortitude to resist an English King and paid for his resistance with his life. ... St. Thomas More, one time chancellor of England, likewise saw the danger and withstood Henry VIII on unholy memory to the face. He likewise paid for his protest with his blood. Luther in Germany, Descartes and Rousseau in France, shook the pillars of Christendom and prepared the way for our present age wherein faith has given way to unbelief, hope to a denial of the immortality of the soul and a future life, and charity to suspicion and hate. True it is that these men did not foresee the magnitude of the evil for which they were responsible any more than does the hunter who carelessly throws a lighted match among the dry leaves of the forest foresee the consequent conflagration. For it is always easier to destroy than to build. <9>

Catholics, however, look to the future with calm confidence founded on strong faith. If in the designs of Divine Providence this civilization is to pass in the not too distant future, they know that the Church of God is strong enough and powerful enough to build a new civilization — a civilization different from the civilization of Western Europe in the days of faith.

The Church is no visionary. She is no doter over what is past. She never destroys but uses the good wherever she finds it. If men will not follow her advice, listen to her counsels and make use of her wisdom, something new and better shall appear upon the earth. For the fertility of the Church, like the fertility of the God Whom she serves is inexhaustible. She is never afraid of novelty but welcomes it. <10>

The means that the Church employs in the accomplishment of her ends is al-

ways one of absorption rather than force. The blood of martyrs has ever been the seed of Christians. After three centuries of heroic endurance, the Christians triumphed over the power of mighty Rome.

... opposing charity to hate, humility to pride and worldly ambition, temperance to sensual enjoyment, faith to reliance upon the unprotected human reason, justice to injustice, willing to forego citizenship in an earthly kingdom in order to ensure permanent citizenship with a kingdom which is divine, relying with absolute confidence upon God to grant help and seasonable aid, using in their conquest, only Christian means. The triumph of our brethren in the first three centuries of the Church's life, was a triumph within the kingdom of the mind. It was a triumph which made the proud Roman a humble follower of the Cross of Christ and a loyal and enthusiastic citizen of the city of God. It was a triumph which broke down the artificial barriers of race and language, which healed the artificial divisions between rich and poor and united all within one household, the household of the faith. <11>

What means, then, does the Church propose to use in rebuilding the social order? The means will naturally be the same as she used in the past. She proposes to restore unity within individual lives where such unity has been destroyed by deliberate sin. To those who have fallen victims to the attack of the world, the flesh and the devil, she offers her never failing remedies, prayer and the Sacraments. To those who earnestly seek a happy family life she proposes the example of the Holy Family at Nazareth, the model after which all homes truly happy must be fashioned. She proposes to restore unity within the social order menaced by class hatred, suspicion, distrust, greed and lust for power, by the rebuilding of faith,



the renewal of hope and the enkindling of charity. She invites all her children to embark with her upon this program of reform by a more intensive living of the Christian life. <12>

The office of teaching is, for the Catholic teacher, a spiritual work of mercy. Christ is served in His members. His members are the students committed to Catholic schools. Catholic teachers are thereby the coadjutors of God in the teaching office. <13> This is the reason why there are religious teaching Orders, since any work of mercy is sufficient reason for the establishment of such Orders.

The Church in times past sanctioned religious orders whose purpose was to rescue the Holy Places from the hands of the infidel. ... Growing unbelief



and the consequent slackening of the moral code makes the need of Christian education imperative in our day. Our youth must be supplied with spiritual arms lest their minds and hearts be taken captive by the enemy. The attack in our day is not against places made holy by the physical Presence of the Incarnate God, but against the Incarnate God Himself, the Church which He established and the doctrines which She teaches. Protestantism was for centuries a via media between Catholicism and unbelief. The ground occupied by Protestantism has been taken over by the infidel, and now there remains but these two camps bitterly hostile one to the other -- the Catholic and the infidel or the neo-pagan. <14>

Father Bellisle shows that St. Thomas, relying upon the strength of the principle that the common good is to be preferred to the private good, praises the religious who, under obedience, sacrifices his own private good and leaves his monastery to minister to the good of others through the office of teaching; for the office of teaching

overflows and ministers to the good of the whole Church. Religious educators follow the example of Christ Who first began to do, and then to teach. The religious state is well adapted for the proper fulfillment of the teaching office. It implies the keeping not only of the Commandments but also of the counsels. It dedicates those who embrace it to contemplation. It urges its members to hand down to others the things they themselves have contemplated.

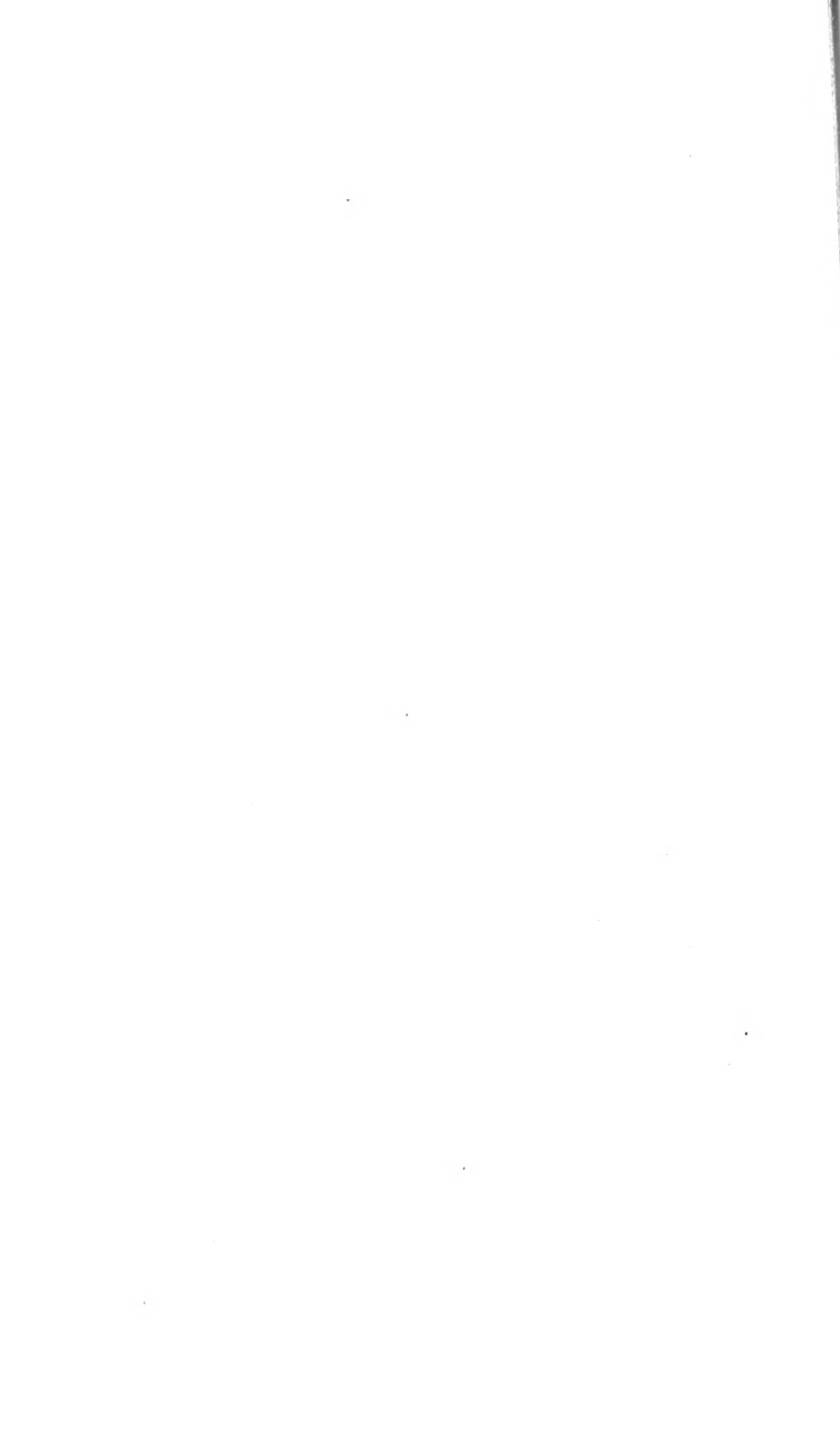
<15>

It (the religious state) thus presses them to imitate the Master, Who began to do and then to teach. Sanctity and then learning, found united in religious in every age of the Church's life, manifest how fruitful is this state in ministering to the proper fulfillment of the teaching office. A runner unencumbered is better fitted for the race. The religious state, freeing its members from solicitude for the things of this

world, enables them to labor fruitfully for God and the neighbor. <16>

So it is that religious teaching Orders must live both a contemplative and an active life. The contemplative life gives them an insight into truth, thereby enabling them to know what to teach; the active life gives them the opportunity to hand on to others the fruits of their contemplation. <17>

The good of the student is the good towards which any teaching effort must be directed. Since the end or purpose gives form and character to the matter, in this case, what is taught to the student, we must conclude that teaching belongs more to the active life than to the contemplative. This is very important. The needs of the student come first. Hence the contemplation of the teacher, in so far as he is a teacher, must be directed with a view to the needs of the student. The teacher then must be prodigal of effort where the needs of the student are concerned. Hence his teaching assignment must influence his study and hours of leisure.



For he is a teacher only in so far as he is master of his subject and can communicate it to his students. <18>

Yet, one must not lose sight of the fact that teaching does in a way belong to the contemplative life too. The teacher first must have knowledge of the truth himself before he can communicate it to others. "The studious professor", says Father Bellisle, "who neglects his students errs just as seriously as the active professor who neglects his studies. <19> The contemplative and the active life must be combined, each holding the place proper to it if the teaching office is to be fulfilled. Contemplation must necessarily precede action in the teaching office. Contemplation overflows into action. In a life that is properly in order, there is no conflict between the two. <20>

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the principles of Father Bellisle's philosophy of education are summed up very clearly and briefly in one issue of The Pamphlet, entitled "Some Principles of Catholic Pedagogy". For this reason, it has seemd advisable to use this pamphlet as a guide in summarizing the principles that have been previously discussed in detail.

Father Bellisle had a clear idea of the place of religion in education, not merely as a subject to be added to an overcrowded curriculum, but as something entering into every subject, and integrated into the whole curriculum.

<1> He believed that a religious teacher has an initial advantage in

that he is trained to look upon the student as another Christ, though this attitude is possible in the case of the Catholic lay teacher as well and should be cultivated. <2>

He believed that the sowing of the seeds of knowledge does not come within the teaching office; for this has already been done by God Himself. However, to assist in bringing the life germ latent in the seed to full and complete maturity, this falls quite readily within the teaching office. The inclination to know, just as the inclination to see, is present from the beginning. The capacity for knowledge is also present from the beginning. Knowledge comes to men through experience. The first fruits of the intelligence,



whether they be principles underlying the entire intellectual structure or the more fundamental and elementary notions of being, unity and such-like, come to man through experience. <3>

The intelligence must lay hold of these basic principles and notions, not by a process of reasoning, but by seeing and grasping them immediately upon being presented. Reasoning does not include all intellectual processes, but is restricted to one, namely, the march of the intelligence from one thing to another. Just as the normal eye, in the presence of color, its proper object, cannot but see, so too, the intelligence cannot but form these fundamental notions and judgments when they are presented in experience. <4>

From these principles, strong enough to carry the whole structure of knowledge and elastic enough to stretch from end to end mightily, follow all other principles. From them as from seeds, grows the tree of knowledge within the mind. From these the mind is led to a knowledge of particular things; the mind, in travelling from universal principles to particular things ranged under the universals, is said to acquire knowledge. When the mind works in this manner the process is called, in the language of St. Thomas, reasoning. <5>

Just as there are two ways of acquiring health when it has been lost, that is, either by the activity of nature alone or by nature aided by medicine, surgery and health treatments of all kinds, so too, there are two ways of acquiring knowledge. Natural reason by its own effort may come to a knowledge of things yet unknown. This is the first way, and is called the method of discovery. Then

again, it is possible that help may be given from without. This is the second way, and is called the method of teaching. <6>

Father Bellisle, following St. Thomas, never loses sight of the fact that men have sinned and in consequence have inherited a damaged intelligence. The wound inflicted upon the intelligence is ignorance. To enable the intelligence to grow and develop and maintain its full vigor, it must be fed upon the truth — the food native to it. Knowledge is the strength of the intelligence, and ignorance is its weakness. <7>

In those things which are accomplished by nature and art, art works in the same way, and endeavors to use the same



means as nature. When a person has been exposed to cold, nature struggles to restore health by inducing heat. The skillful doctor observes how nature works and makes use of the same means. Thus art is said to imitate nature. In like manner, since teaching is an art, the teacher first must discover how the mind of the student works in the acquisition of knowledge. He must examine how the student, following the native bent and inclination of his mind, proceeds from the known to the unknown. He finds that the student applies principles which are self-evident to well-defined objects of knowledge, and so advances from general principles to particular conclusions. <8>

Hence the skilful teacher will always keep in mind the nature of the instru-

ment which he is seeking to direct towards truth. The teacher is said to teach when he unfolds through signs that march of reason which he has accomplished within himself by the natural reason. These signs may be gestures or words, spoken or written. Thus St. Thomas pre-supposes in a teacher knowledge of what he is teaching. He expects that the teacher first has travelled over the intellectual ground himself before he attempts to induce the students to traverse the same ground. The student using the signs presented to him by the teacher as instruments arrives at a knowledge of things hitherto unknown. These instruments in the acquisition of knowledge act much in the same way as medicine administered by a doctor to an ailing patient in the effort to win him back to health.

<9>

Just as the doctor is said to cause health within the patient, though it is nature which does the work, so too the teacher is said to cause knowledge within the student, though it is the reason of the student which is set to work in the acquisition of knowledge.

<10>

When a teacher presents to a student things which are not included under self-evident principles or not clearly included under them, he is inducing in the student not certitude, but opinion or belief. However, even here the basic principles of knowledge are operating; for relying on these principles the student knows that conclusions which necessarily follow from them must be held beyond the shadow of a doubt. He knows, too, that conclusions contrary to them must be rejected. As for conclusions which are not clearly included under them, he can give assent or not, depending upon the cogency of the evidence submitted. <11>

Loving the truth as he must, the Christian teacher respects the mind of the



student. He must be intellectually honest. This means that he will show the student the hierarchy of knowledge and will point out to him the degrees of certitude possible on each level.

"He puts first things first because they are first, not because he wishes them to be so." <12>

There are three who share in the formation of knowledge within the human mind, namely, God, the teacher, and the student. To achieve the end proper to man in respect to knowledge, each of these three must perform his proper office. God supplies the ability and the capacity to know, and works from within the mind of the student; the teacher works from without, aiding the student to see the conclusions in the light of the principles; and the stu-



dent, in the light of the principles which his mind must grasp immediately, must progress, step by step, from one truth to another. The angels, too, can be the cause of knowledge in the student. Their knowledge of truth is greater than man's; but since they do not ordinarily teach with sensible signs as does the human teacher, they must work upon man's imagination by means of images or phantasms. God alone works within the mind, infusing light. The angel infuses neither the light of nature nor the light of grace, but strengthens the light of nature divinely infused. The human teacher does not cause truth within the mind of the student, but causes a knowledge of the truth. <13>



Father Bellisle believed that religious Orders are best suited to the office of teaching, not only because their members are well trained in the science of Christian truth, but also because they have, by their three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, renounced all earthly attachment to riches, family life and intellectual pride, all of which can be distractions in the pursuit of intellectual knowledge and truth and in the teaching of others. <14>

Father Bellisle was tremendously influenced by the writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. He constantly turned to them for enlightenment when faced by problems of a difficult nature. He had a great trust in them and felt that they held the key which unlocked the door to truth.



We cannot but feel in studying the doctrines of St. Augustine and St. Thomas that we are again in a Christian world and consequently are safe with these two as our guides. Could we not move forward with them towards the formulation of a Christian pedagogy? <15>



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A P P E N D I X



WHO IS JOHN DEWEY*

John Dewey is a professor of philosophy at Columbia University. He is the outstanding figure in American education, known by his numerous writings, in the United States, Canada and Europe. He was born at Burlington, Vermont, in the year 1859, the year in which Darwin's Origin of Species appeared. Spencer's Essays on Education appeared between the years 1854-59. These two works have exerted a powerful influence upon the mind of Dewey. He graduated from the University of Vermont and continued his studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. While there he followed a non-laboratory course in biology and so came under the influence of Huxley. He was also introduced to Hegel, huge blocks of whose philosophy survive in his writings. He also came under the influence of William James and his pragmatic philosophy. He borrows copiously from Rousseau's Emile. John Dewey is an atheist with all that it implies.

* The Reverend H.S. Bellisle, C.S.B., "Who Is John Dewey?" 1453, Windsor Council of the Knights of Columbus, XV (November 1, 1938), 3. This editorial is very important, especially for American Catholic School teachers. For this reason it is here given in full.

Why do Catholic educators refuse to follow the Progressive educational programme of John Dewey:

(1) John Dewey says: Man's home is nature. Man is continuous with nature, not an alien entering her processes from without. Man has evolved from the animal state.

The Catholic Church says: The soul of each individual man has been created directly by God. This is an article of faith. Man's body was likewise created by God. This, while not defined as an article of faith, is a theological conclusion. To depart from this position as did Mivart would invite her condemnation.

(2) John Dewey says: Change is omnipresent. Nature is constantly unfolding. The teacher must watch nature and not anticipate it. Human nature is ever in the process of becoming. We know what it is now. We do not know what it will become.

The Catholic Church says: Human nature never radically changes. Man is, has been and will always be, a rational animal. This nature, though damaged by original sin still remains human nature. The teacher in ministering to the human mind must never lose sight of the fact that the intelligence has been made for truth and the will for good. God is both Truth and Goodness.

(3) John Dewey says: There is no God beyond this world. God did not become man. There has been no Redemption nor is there need of one. Sin is no longer possible since there is no God. This visible world is a closed system and nothing exists beyond it.

The Catholic Church teaches: God, individual and personal, exists apart from the world. Though intimately present in His own creation, He is not in any sense part of it. The Second Person of the Trinity, equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, became man to save a fallen race.

(4) John Dewey says: There is no eternal Lawgiver. There is no Highest Good. There are as many specific goods as there are situations requiring improvement. One should aim to be what one is capable of becoming through association with others in the offices of life. Success and failure in this life are the primary categories of life. The moral law is constantly changing.

The Catholic Church says: God is the eternal Law. Sin is always a violation of God's law. The moral law does not evolve but has grown in fullness. Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. The ten commandments are just



as binding today as when they were first given on Sinai. Success and failure in this world are not the primary categories of life. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"

- (5) John Dewey says: Philosophy is education.

St. Thomas Aquinas says: Education is a science subordinated to philosophy.

- (6) John Dewey says: The function of the school is to transform pupil experience, not pupil personality. Natural conditions are to be scientifically improved not human nature.

The Catholic Church says: The function of the school is to train the intelligence and the will in such wise that the pupil will be enabled to think aright and act aright. The Catholic Church is always careful to safeguard the freedom of the human will.

- (7) John Dewey says: Sociality and interest should control human life.

The Catholic Church says: Duty and obligation, revealed by reason informed by faith and inspired by love of God, are the determinants of conduct.

(8) John Dewey says: Personality is individual growth coincident with and produced by social efficiency. The individual is merely an aspect of the social organism.

The Catholic Church teaches: Man belongs to society according to his nature. In so far as he is a person he belongs to God to Whom he is ultimately responsible for the deeds done in the flesh. Hence he may not be absorbed by the State nor by any social organism but has rights and duties to a Person Who is above all States and social organisms, to God, the Author and Finisher of his life.

(9) John Dewey says: The Christian virtues of humility, obedience and restraint are not virtues. They thwart the initiative of the child and develop the listening attitude.

The Catholic Church says: The Christian virtues of humility is the foundation of the whole spiritual structure. The Christian virtue of humility was practiced in its fullness by the Incarnate God Himself Who was obedient unto death. Without restraint there is no morality possible.

(10) John Dewey says: The function of the teacher is to modify stimuli so that the response will as surely as possible result in the formation of



desirable intellectual and emotional dispositions. Dewey is a determinist. He does not believe in free will as we interpret it.

The Catholic Church teaches that the pupil has free will. With the first dawn of reason he becomes a moral agent. He is then responsible to God for his conduct. It is the duty of the teacher to assist him in such wise that his choice will be in accord with the law of God. The decision and responsibility for it rests ultimately with the pupil. Moral training assists the child in capturing those virtues necessary for the right ordering of life.

(11) Dewey says: Truth consists in solving problems. The school must project the type of society which is desirable by forming the student mind in a miniature society to the end that in due time the larger one outside may be gradually modified.

St. Thomas Aquinas says: Truth consists in the conformity of the mind with reality. The child must be taught to see things as they are. The child should be taught reverence for authority, first for parental authority, then for civil authority when it is properly exercised and then for ecclesiastical authority. For the child lives its life within these three institutions, the home, the state and the Church.

(12) Dewey says: A new type of student must be produced whose duty it is to build a man centred universe.

The Catholic Church says: The child must be taught to know and love God here on earth that afterwards it may enjoy Him for ever in heaven.

Conclusion

Dewey's system is well described as socialistic naturalism. Instead of being progressive it is regressive. It is an attempted revival of the naturalism of the ancient Greeks. He eliminates all that makes life worth living. For he eliminates God, Revelation, the Incarnation, Redemption, the Catholic Church, Heaven, the soul and immortality.

Dewey has not made one contribution of major importance to the science of teaching. He has borrowed from Rousseau, Hegel, Darwin, Spencer, James and a host of others. He has dressed up his borrowings in attractive language and has given them the appearance of novelty. The doctrine of all of these has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Catholic educators will have none of him.



NOTES



Chapter I. Biographical Introduction,
pages 3-12

- <1> Very Reverend E.J. McCorkell, C.S.B.
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tion Church, Windsor, Ontario, De-
cember 30, 1938.
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in a letter to the author, dated
Nov. 3, 1942.
- <4> Ibid. Cf. also a letter of the Very
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author, dated Oct. 2, 1942.
- <5> The author was, incidentally, a
member of the first freshman class
to enter St. Michael's College
under the new arrangement.
- <6> Very Reverend E.J. McCorkell, C.S.B.
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Father Bellisle's Philosophy
of Education.
p. 13-93

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- <2> Ibid., pp. 4, 5
- <3> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica,
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- <27> Ibid.
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- <31> Bellisle, "Some Principles of Catholic Pedagogy", p. 19
- <32> Ibid.
- <33> Ibid.
- <34> Ibid., pp. 19-20
- <35> Ibid., p. 20
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- <37> Ibid., pp. 21-22
- <38> Henry S. Bellisle, C.S.B., "Philosophy and Life", pp. 8-9. It is presumed in the above quotation that Father Bellisle refers to David Hume, the Scotch historian and philosopher; in which case it is doubtless the printer's error.
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School Education.
p. 94-107

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pp. 21-22. This same idea was ex-
pressed in a letter of Father
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same idea is expressed in the Rule
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- <18> Bellisle, "Programme of Studies", 1453, XIV (May, 1938), 5.



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of Higher Education.
p. 108-115

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- <2> H.S. Bellisle, C.S.B., "Some Principles of Catholic Pedagogy", p. 7
- <3> Ibid., pp. 7-8
- <4> Ibid., p. 12
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- <7> Quotation from the 1931-1932 Syllabus of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, by Father Bellisle in The Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1933, pp. 12-13
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p. 116-130

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p. 131-142

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- <7> Ibid., p. 10
- <8> Ibid.
- <9> Ibid., pp. 10-11
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- <11> Ibid., pp. 11-12
- <12> Ibid., p. 12
- <13> Ibid., pp. 12, 13, 17, 19, 22, passim.
- <14> Ibid., p. 23
- <15> Ibid., p. 24



(Transcribed from the carbon copy presented by the author to his parents, iii, 81 typewritten leaves. In this copy the footnotes are placed at the foot of the page on which the reference occurs.)

Father Bellisle's pamphlet on The Institute of Mediaeval Studies received only a limited distribution because it was felt by the Institute staff that some of the views expressed in it were not in accord with the findings of modern scholarship. RJS

A number of the administrative changes made by Father Bellisle in the high school department and in athletic policy at St. Michael's were reversed by Father McCorkell who both preceded and followed him in the office of Local Superior. The policies that he decided to reverse were considered by Father McCorkell to be a departure from the traditions of St. Michael's College. RJS

Father Bellisle was appointed to graduate studies at Paris, but he was so homesick for community life that he returned within a few weeks. His failure to go on for a doctorate was a contributing cause, along with his state of health, for his removal from the staff of the Institute of Mediaeval Studies and transfer to Assumption College in 1935, the year in which specially trained priests returned from graduate studies. RJS













